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ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION AND
ADMINISTRATION IN THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN INDIA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1935

BY
MARVIN HENRY HARPER

MADE IN INDIA

THE LUCKNOW PUBLISHING HOUSE,
LUCKNOW, INDIA

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EXPERIMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND
ADMINISTRATION IN THE
METHODS OF RESEARCH
IN PHYSICS

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. Methodist—There are now in India two branches of the "Methodist" Church—the Methodist Episcopal Church (which is occasionally referred to as the "American" Methodist Church) and the Methodist Church (formerly the "Wesleyan Methodist Church") which has resulted from the recent union of several Methodist and Wesleyan bodies in England. The present study involves the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church only, and in those cases where, for the sake of brevity, the title "The Methodist Church" has been used the Methodist Episcopal Church is to be understood. Similarly, the "Methodists" here referred to are Episcopal Methodists.

2. Indians—In referring to the indigenous peoples of India the now commonly accepted term, "National," has generally been used. But there have been occasions where, in order to preserve the language of sources employed, it has been found necessary to use the term, "native"—a term which is now usually avoided by writers on India.

3. In the case of works which have been often quoted the following abbreviations have been used:

Discipline—Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

JGC —Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

MBC —Minutes of the Bombay Annual Conference of the M. E. Church.

MIAC —Minutes of the India Annual Conference of the M. E. Church.

MIMC —Minutes of the India Mission Conference of the M. E. Church.

MNIC —Minutes of the North India Annual Conference of the M. E. Church.

- MSIC —*Minutes of the South India Annual Conference of the M. E. Church.*
- MCC —*Minutes of the Central Conference of the M. E. Church in Southern Asia.*
- MEB —*Minutes of the Executive Board of the M. E. Church in Southern Asia.*
- RMS —*Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the M. E. Church.*
- JBFM —*Annual Journal of the Board of Foreign Missions of the M. E. Church.*
- RBFM —*Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the M. E. Church.*
- MMS —*Minutes of the Board of Managers and of the General Missionary Committee of the Missionary Society of the M. E. Church.*

PREFACE

The year 1936 marks the eightieth anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. Dr. William Butler and his family took up their residence in Bareilly on December 7, 1856. Upon the foundations laid by Dr. Butler there has grown up a large Church, with a Christian community of more than half a million persons. Methodist ecclesiastical organization and administration at present differ widely from that introduced by the founders of the Mission. During the last fifteen years, especially, the Christian Church has felt the influence of the Nationalist Movement, and many significant developments have occurred as a consequence in Methodist polity.

The present study seeks to trace the evolution of some phases of the organization, administration, and missionary policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India from 1856 to 1935. Consideration of the significant actions relative to Methodist polity adopted by the Central Conference of December, 1935, and by the General Conference of 1936 would require an additional chapter. Such a chapter cannot be written at this time. It has been necessary to omit references to much of the history of the Church which, though extremely interesting, is not germane to our subject.

A word of appreciation is due to all those who have helped in making this study possible. Special mention should be made of the inspiration and help received from Dr. Archibald G. Baker and Dr. John T. McNeill of the Divinity School, University of Chicago. Grateful acknowledgment is also made of the service rendered by the Secretaries and Librarian of the Board of Foreign Missions, and by the Library Staff of the Garrett Biblical Institute and of the Missionary Research Library, who have so kindly made available material indispensable to the preparation of this work. Thanks are also due to those friends in India who have read the manuscript and have given valuable suggestions and other help.

From this study of the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India the writer has himself gained a much clearer understanding of the processes through which the polity of this Church has developed. It is his hope that others may find it similarly useful.

CHAPTER I

The Methodist Episcopal Mission in India 1856—1864

THE first period of Methodist Episcopal missionary activity in India was a period of pioneering and foundation-laying. Although missionaries of other American and British Missionary Societies had been at work in India for many years when the first representative of the Methodist Episcopal church arrived in India, the field of labour selected for the Methodist Mission was yet unoccupied by any other society. Although the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been organized in 1819, and the first missionary had been sent to the foreign field in 1832, the missionaries sent to India had to deal with problems with which the Society until that time had had no experience. The India Mission soon became the largest Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and ecclesiastical and administrative policies developed as new problems presented themselves to the Mission in India were to exert a large influence on the history and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

The Methodist work in India was begun as a Mission, and for years the organization in India has been popularly known as the "Methodist Episcopal Mission," but ecclesiastical and administrative policies were early adopted which led, under the genius of Methodist Episcopal polity, to the development of an Indian Church, in which Americans and Nationals have an integral part. Thus the Episcopal Methodists have been spared many of those perplexing problems which other organizations have faced under the title "Church-Mission Relationships." But in the first period of its history the Methodist Episcopal missionary activity must be studied as a Mission rather than as a Church.

1. Founding the Mission

1. The idea of a Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India seems to have originated with Dr. John P. Durbin, the

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Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.¹ Shortly after his election as Secretary the General Missionary Committee of the Missionary Society instructed him to make inquiries concerning the best point for a mission in India.² In 1852 a resolution was presented to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and adopted almost unanimously by that body, "That the time has fully come when the Methodist Episcopal Church ought to increase the number and extent of her foreign missions."³ A few days later the action of the General Missionary Committee with regard to organizing a mission in India was reported to the General Conference, and received its approval.⁴

When the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society met in June 1852, Dr. Durbin called attention to the resolutions introduced and acted upon at the recent session of the General Conference, but discussion of the matter was postponed to a later session of the Board. Dr. Durbin thereupon gave notice that the question of the India Mission would be the chief subject of the next meeting.⁵ This would indicate that at that time Dr. Durbin felt more keenly than others the desirability of a Mission in India. When the Board of Managers met in November an appropriation of \$7,500 was made for commencing a mission in India.⁶ This action was repeated at the November meetings in

¹Although the official records do not mention his name in this connection this is the view of Bishop James M. Thoburn, *India and Malaysia* (New York, 1892), p. 223, and of J. E. Scott, *History of Fifty Years* (Madras, India, 1906), p. 3. The latter notes, also, that Alexander Duff visited America at this period in the interest of Missions in India and "pressed upon the Missionary Society the duty of undertaking part of this work, and the Society was thus confirmed in its purpose to open a Mission in India."

²*Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, XI (1852), 136. Cited hereafter as *JGC*.

³*Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵Minutes of the Board of Managers and General Missionary Committee of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, V. 293. Unpublished documents in the Library, Board of Foreign Missions, M. E. Church, New York. Cited hereafter as *MMS*.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 300.

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1853,¹ 1854,² and 1855.³ Until that time the Bishops had been unable to secure a missionary Superintendent for India. But at the meeting of December 19, 1855, the Corresponding Secretary reported the appointment of a Superintendent for India,⁴ and on January 16, of the following year he introduced the Reverend William Butler to the Board. Dr. Butler took this occasion to express to the Board "his views of the work to which he had been appointed."⁵ Unfortunately, no record is preserved of the views expressed.

2. William Butler, a native of Ireland, had come to America as a young man. While in England he had come into contact with missionaries from India and had had his interest in Indian missions aroused.⁶ This fact, along with the advantages of his early contact with the British, influenced the Society in selecting him as the founder of the Methodist mission in British India. Concerning these earliest incidents in Indian Methodist history Dr. Butler some years later wrote:

I received my commission as superintendent and my letter of instructions in March, 1856, and left for my distant field on April 9, in the "Canada." My attention was directed in my instructions to the Western Presidency, North Western Provinces (now the United Provinces), to North-eastern Bengal and to North Mysore. A large discretion was allowed me, after due inquiry in London and Calcutta, and if need be, in the localities named, in choosing the field to be occupied by the Missionary Society of our Church. Having sought all the information within my reach to enable me to decide this important question, I was led very decidedly to prefer a location in Northwest India.

The reasons for my choice of this part of the country were laid before Bishop Simpson and the Board of Managers in full report, dated Bereilly, March 10, 1857, one year

¹*Ibid.*, p. 350.

²*Ibid.*, p. 416.

³*Ibid.*, VI, 8.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 49. In May Dr. Durbin had published a proclamation called "The Crisis." On October 10, 1855, William Butler offered himself as a candidate, and in January of the following year Bishop Simpson notified him of his acceptance (William Butler, *Land of the Veda* [New York, 1872], p. 101).

⁵MMS. VI, 54.

⁶Clementina Butler, *William Butler Founder of Two Missions* (New York, 1902), pp. 15-37.

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exactly after receiving my commission. Report was accepted and the choice approved, and thus the first great step was taken toward founding our India Mission.¹

With his family William Butler sailed from Boston. He spent some time in England interviewing the secretaries of the several British missionary societies. He arrived in Calcutta on September 23, and was warmly welcomed by missionaries and Government officials. Concerning this welcome, he wrote to the Missionary Society, "Bishops, magistrates, judges, commissioners, and even the governor himself, have all been led providentially to welcome your mission to the shores of India."²

3. After several weeks had been spent in consultation with Dr. Duff and other missionaries in Calcutta Dr. Butler chose the Provinces of Oudh and Rohilkhand as the field of labour for the Methodist Episcopal Mission. Previous to William Butler's sailing on April 9, Dr. Durbin seems to have made considerable inquiry concerning the appropriate location of the mission in India, for Dr. Butler's attention was directed in his instructions to the Western Presidency, to North-eastern Bengal, to North Mysore, and to the Northwestern Provinces (now the United Provinces).³ Thus in the all-important selection of the territory in which the Mission was to be located, the decision rested finally with the Corresponding Secretary and the newly appointed Superintendent.

One principle which seems to have guided in the selection was the desire to secure an area in which no other Mission was at work. Bishop Thoburn, in his *India and Malaysia*, tells us that Dr. Durbin formally proposed to the General Committee of the

¹Bishop B. T. Badley, *Visions and Victories in Hindustan* (Madras, 1931), pp. xiii-xiv. Unfortunately, the letter of March 10, 1857, to which Dr. Butler refers, along with most of his letters to the Society, is no longer in the possession of the Board of Foreign Missions, so that we cannot tell exactly what were his reasons for his choice of Northwest India. Reference to the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society for May 20, and June 17, of that year indicate that communications had been received from Dr. Butler, but do not inform as to their contents.

²*Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, XXXVIII (1857), 68. Cited hereafter as *RMS*.

³W. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

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Missionary Society to select one of the unoccupied fields in India,¹ and Dr. Butler said in 1864, when reviewing the situation previous to his return to America :

It seems but yesterday, as it were, when I first entered Lucknow and Bareilly, and toiled up alone through both these provinces; and there was hardly a ray of Christian light, for there was not one missionary to be found living among the millions from Jaunpore to Hardwar. No chapels or congregations or schools in those great native cities.²

As long as Butler remained in India this policy of entering only those areas in which no other Mission was at work guided the Methodists. Two men seem to have been instrumental in causing the Church deliberately to abandon this policy. They were James Mills Thoburn and William Taylor.

From Calcutta the Butlers set out for Lucknow, which was to become the centre of the mission. In Allahabad Dr. Butler secured the services of Joel Janvier, an Indian minister belonging to the Presbyterian Mission.³ The party arrived in Lucknow on November 29. But it proved impossible to find a suitable house for the missionary family, so Dr. Butler pushed on to Bareilly, which he reached on December 7. A house was secured, and with the able assistance of Janvier a small congregation was gathered, and services were held in the Butler bungalow.⁴

4. Early in 1857 signs of unrest among the Sepoys⁵ became evident, and it was not long until the Mutiny broke out. After the massacre at Meerut on May 10, the officials at Bareilly managed to have the Butler family conveyed in safety to Naini Tal, a hill station which had been selected as the place of refuge for such Europeans as could leave their stations in that part of the Province.⁶ Joel Janvier and his wife continued to hold services in Bareilly. But on May 31, the Mutiny broke out in Bareilly with

¹P. 223.

²Badley, *op. cit.*, p. xiv. Further, the Provinces of Oudh and Rohilkhand formed a very compact area, being surrounded by natural boundaries, and the people of this field practically all spoke the same language.

³W. Bulter, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-20. Cf. also, Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴W. Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-23.

⁵Sepoy, an Indian soldier in the British army.

⁶W. Buler, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-42.

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a general massacre of the European inhabitants. Janvier was just concluding the Sunday service at the Mission house when the little congregation was attacked. Among those slain was Miss Maria Bolst, an Anglo-Indian young woman who had joined the Butlers in the mission work. Joel Janvier and his wife managed to escape and fled to Allahabad, where they remained until it was safe for them to return to their work in Bareilly.¹ The mission bungalow was destroyed and Dr. Butler's valuable library as well as most of his personal possessions were lost.²

Naini Tal now became the centre of Methodist Episcopal mission activity. Dr. Butler organized services for the European population of the town. A congregation was formed, which due to the fact that most of the men were engaged in military activities, was composed chiefly of women and children. From this small beginning the English-speaking Methodist congregation has grown.³

In September 1857 the Reverend and Mrs. J. L. Humphrey and the Reverend and Mrs. Ralph Pierce, new missionaries from America, arrived in Calcutta. Dr. and Mrs. Butler travelled down from Naini Tal and met the recruits in Agra.⁴ The party of missionaries, joined on the way by the Janviers, proceeded to Naini Tal. In this town the missionaries and their Indian colleague soon began active evangelistic work.⁵ The group was joined in May by a young English officer, Samuel Knowles, who had become

¹Incidents connected with his escape from Bareilly and with the hardships of his journey to Allahabad are recounted by Janvier in his letter of February 4, 1858, to Dr. Butler. The leaders of the mutiny in Bareilly either believed or pretended to believe that the Methodist Mission had been established under the auspices of the British Government for the purpose of forcing the conversion of the nationals to Christianity. Dr. Butler learned later that a price had been placed on his head (*Land of the Veda*, pp. 246-57).

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*, pp. 263-73. Naini Tal is the headquarters of the Naini Tal civil district on Lake Naini Tal in the Himalayas, 6,300 feet above the sea. It was fairly secure from attack and was considered considerably safer than were the cities on the plains.

⁴With the capture of Delhi by the British the last stronghold of the mutineers fell. It was now considered safe for the Butlers to come down from Naini Tal and for the new missionaries to venture into the interior (*Land of the Veda*, pp. 409-34).

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 434 f.

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interested in the work which the Methodists were doing. Thus began the policy of accepting as regular missionaries qualified men who joined the mission in India. A little later another Englishman, Josiah Parsons, was also received into the missionary body.¹

Dr. Butler now began to lay permanent foundations for Methodist work in Naini Tal. A piece of property containing a house was purchased. The house became the home of the missionaries. An old sheep-cote was used as a temporary place of worship. The British Commissioner of Kumaon and Garhwal became interested in the work of the mission and gave a generous amount to the funds which were being raised for building a permanent church edifice.² Dr. Butler's success in securing funds from British and Indian friends of the mission was an important feature of the early period of Methodist missionary activity.³ The corner-stone of the mission church—the first permanent church building of American Methodism in India—was laid in October 1858.⁴

Shortly after this event Dr. Butler with his family, Reverend and Mrs. Pierce and Janvier went to Lucknow, while the missionaries who remained in Naini Tal opened a school for Indian boys and one for Indian girls, and built up the English and Hindustani congregations.⁵ In 1859 the Reverend J. M. Thoburn, a new arrival from America, was appointed to the work in Naini Tal.⁶

Dr. Butler now set about the establishment of work in Lucknow. In his report to the Society in 1859 he wrote :

The Mutiny has marvellously opened the way for the extension of our mission. It has given us Naini Tal, in the mountains, as a fruitful station, and a sanitarium. It has opened our way into Lucknow. There, probably, will be the centre of our mission. The government has manifested great interest in our mission, and given us all the buildings we can want

¹Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

²W. Bulter, *op. cit.*, pp. 434-37.

³In his final report to the missionary Society in 1864, Dr. Butler says that \$55,186.50 had been secured in India for the work of the Mission.

⁴J. L. Humphrey, *Twenty-One Years in India* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1905), p. 76.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

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for some time to come, in Lucknow, free of any rent or charge, and even put them all in thorough repair.¹

The Sepoy Rebellion had more far reaching influences on the history of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, and upon all Christian missions in India, than was at first imagined. The immediate result was that the religious atmosphere of suspicion and doubt was somewhat cleared. The Proclamation of the Queen Empress² made it quite clear to the people of India that the British Government had no secret purpose of proselytizing either by force or by intrigue. Christian British officials were now able to give their personal support to the missionary enterprise without entangling the Government in religious problems. Opponents to the British rule were no longer able to stir up opposition on the basis of fanatical defense of the traditional religions of the Indian people, as had been the case in the Vellore Mutiny³ and the Sepoy Rebellion. India now passed directly under the control of the British Crown, and the cause of Christian missions, externally at least, was more highly favoured. The British East India Company had been indifferent, if not opposed, to the work of the missionaries. But the Queen Empress was avowedly Christian, and her Government now gave to Christianity the same privileges which non-Christian religions had enjoyed under the Company.

But the Mutiny undoubtedly had another influence, and that not favourable to the future of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Unwittingly, Dr. Butler had chosen as the field of the mission the section of India in which the Mutiny proved to be most severe. Though the military power of the mutineers was crushed by British arms the religious hatred and fanatical opposition to Christianity continued to smolder within the hearts of the leaders. The Mohammedan element was prominent

¹Badley, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

²"Firmly relying on the truth of Christianity and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion," the Queen disclaimed "the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects." Tolerance was promised to all. None was to be favoured, molested, or disquieted by reason of his religion (A. Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India* [London, 1929], pp. 187 f.)

³July 10, 1806. See *Edinburgh Review*, XI (1808), 151-73.

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in Oudh and Rohilkhand and the Mohammedans have always been the most bitter opponents of Christian missions. Many leading Hindus had either joined or sympathized with the mutineers. As a consequence, the entrance of the Methodist missionaries was viewed with suspicion or opposition by Hindu and Mohammedan leaders. The Missionary Reports of the early years clearly indicate this opposition.¹ The result was that the conversions from among the high caste Hindus and Mohammedans of position were very few. The missionaries turned naturally to those who would receive them, and these were, in general, people of the lower stratum of society.² This fact was to prove extremely significant in the later history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.

5. Lucknow has well nigh fulfilled the prediction of Dr. Butler and has become a most important centre of the Methodist Church in India. Ralph Pierce and Joel Janvier were appointed to Lucknow in 1859. After considerable correspondence with the Missionary Society Dr. Butler organized the first Orphanage of the Methodist Mission in Lucknow.³ This was intended to care for the orphans of the mutineers. From its orphanages the Methodist Church drew many of its ministers and thousands of its members, especially in the closing years of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth centuries, when great numbers of children made orphan by the famines were received into the Methodist orphanages. This fact also had large influence in determining the constituency of the Methodist Church in India, for many of the orphans had come from under-privileged homes. The Lucknow orphanage was transferred to Bareilly in 1863.

A new beginning was made by Methodism at Bareilly when, on February 26, 1859, Reverend and Mrs. Humphrey entered the city. They were soon joined by the Janviers. Dr. Humphrey took up his residence in a large Indian mansion which was put at

¹See the Station Reports printed annually in the *Report of the Missionary Society of the M. E. Church*, XLIII (1862), 24; XLV (1864), 51, etc.

²For example, the Mazabhi Sikhs of the Moradabad District, who were a robber caste. Many of the early converts to Methodism came from this group. See Humphrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-87.

³The Missionary Society, on April 21, 1858, voted a grant of \$ 1,000 for establishing the orphanage (MMS, VI, 196).

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the disposal of the Mission by the British Government. Later the Butlers and Reverend and Mrs. J. W. Waugh also came to Bareilly and took up their residence in the same old mansion. In March 1859 Dr. Humphrey preached his first sermon in the Bareilly bazar, and on July 24 of that year he baptized the first convert to join the Methodist Mission.¹ This was Zahur-ul-Haqq, a young man of a good Mohammedan family,² who in 1882, became the first Indian Presiding Elder of the Methodist Church in India.³ In December Humphrey visited Budaun, which later became an important centre of Methodism. This was soon followed by the conversion of the first high-caste Hindu in Bareilly, Ambica Charan. Not long after occurred the baptism of the first Mazabhi-Sikh converts. This community played a most important part in the later history of Methodism, for it was from this group that large mass-movements took place.⁴

A very important project was launched in 1861 when the first Methodist printing press was established in Bareilly under the supervision of J. W. Waugh.⁵ This soon began to turn out a remarkably large volume of work. In 1866 the press was moved to Lucknow, where it has become one of the largest mission presses in India.

When the India Mission conference was organized in 1864, and Dr. Butler turned over the superintendency of the Mission to others, he reported that nine important cities had been occupied,⁶ nineteen mission houses provided, sixteen schoolhouses and ten chapels erected, two large orphanages⁷ and a press established,

¹Humphrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-21; W. Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 441 f.

²Scott., *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50.

³*Minutes of the North India Annual Conference* (Lucknow, 1882), p. 77. Cited hereafter as MNIC.

⁴Humphrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-40.

⁵Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

⁶These were: Naini Tal, occupied by William Butler in 1867; Lucknow, occupied by Butler and Pierce in 1858; Bareilly, occupied by J. L. Humphrey in 1859; Moradabad, entered by Josiah Parsons in 1858; Shahjahanpur, entered by J. L. Humphrey and J. W. Waugh in 1859; Bijnor, occupied by E. W. Parker in 1859; Budaun, entered by Humphrey and Samuel Knowles in 1859; Sitapur, occupied by J. T. Gracey in 1861; Rae-Bareilly, entered by P. T. Wilson in 1864.

⁷The Boys' Orphanage in Lucknow and the Girls' Orphanage opened in Bareilly in 1858. Cf. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

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twelve congregations gathered, ten small churches organized, 1,322 youths were under instruction daily, 161 had been converted, four of whom had become preachers and eleven exhorters, there were 111 members and 66 probationers in the Methodist Church; \$ 55,186.50 had been contributed in India for the Mission, and property had been accumulated worth \$ 73,188.50.¹

2. Supervision

Theoretically the authority for determining missionary policies during this period was vested in several ecclesiastical bodies in America² and India, but practically the details of missionary administration seem to have been worked out very

¹Badley, *op. cit.*, p. xv. The most complete history of Methodist Episcopal missionary activity in the nine cities first occupied known to the writer is given in Bishop Badley's *Visions and Victories in Hindustan*. Other useful treatments of the subject are found in Butler, *Land of the Veda*, *passim*; Scott, *History of Fifty Years*, pp. 1-81; J. M. Reid and J. T. Gracey, *Mission and Missionary Society of the M. E. Church* (New York, 1895), Vol. II, *passim*; Humphrey, *Twenty-One Years in India*, pp. 1-166.

²The supreme legislative body in the Methodist Episcopal Church is its General Conference, a quadrennial assembly composed of delegates from the several Annual Conferences. It is obvious that a body so large as this could give very little attention to the details of missionary administration. All matters relating to missions were first referred to the Committee on Missions of the General Conference. To this committee were presented the quadrennial report of the Missionary Society and the various memorials sent to the General Conference by the Missions, the Annual Conferences, and individuals. After deliberation, the Committee on Missions presented resolutions to the General Conference. But the fact that this Committee was itself rather large—in 1864 it was composed of 49 members—would indicate that only the matters of larger interest could receive its consideration. The resolutions presented by the Committee on Missions, when adopted by the General Conference, became the law of the Church. Cf. *Journal of General Conference*.

The more detailed management of the missionary interests rested in the "Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church" which was established "for the express purpose of enabling the several annual conferences more effectively to extend their missionary labors throughout the United States and elsewhere; and also to assist in the support and promotion of missionary schools and missions in our own and foreign countries." The payment of twenty dollars constituted one a member for life. The management and disposition of the affairs and property of the Society were vested in a Board of Managers, "consisting of thirty-two laymen, all being members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and so many clerical members, not exceeding that number, as shall be determined at each annual meeting, each of whom shall be a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and all of whom, both lay and clerical members, shall be elected at the said annual meeting." The Board of Managers met

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largely by the Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society and the Superintendent of the Mission in India.

The Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society during the early period of the Methodist Episcopal Mission in India was Dr. John P. Durbin, who gave his full time to the affairs of the Society. It is only to be expected that the records should indicate that a great many of the decisions affecting the policies of the India Mission should have been made by him. When the Society sent Dr. Butler to India it appointed him Superintendent of the India Mission. According to the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church one of its bishops had episcopal supervision of the field, but all of the official correspondence with India was carried on by Dr. Durbin and Dr. Butler. The first "Annual Meeting" of the Mission occurred in 1859. In the absence of a bishop from America, Dr. Butler presided over the Annual Meeting. His ideas and ideals carried much weight in determining the policies of the Mission during this formative period. This system of almost individual control continued until the organization of the India Mission Conference in 1864. James Mudge, one of the early Methodist missionaries, likens the position occupied by Dr. Butler to that of the Viceroy of India, and adds:

In other words, the position included a large amount of absolute power, subject only to general directions, and in rare cases a veto, from New York. The Superintendent was practically the agent of the Missionary Society entrusted with the entire management of their property, clothed with full authority over their funds and also over the stations of the Missionaries, moving them from place to place as seemed in

several times annually and conducted the interim business of the Society, to which it presented a statement of its transactions and funds at its Annual Meeting. A report was also made quadrennially to the General Conference. A body known as the "General Missionary Committee" was composed of one representative from each of the mission districts in the United States. This body, whose members were appointed by the bishops, met annually in New York previously to the Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society, and acted jointly with the Board of Managers, the Corresponding Secretary, and the Treasurer in determining the budget of the Society for the ensuing year. The Corresponding Secretary of the Society was elected by the General Conference. The Missionary Society was reorganized in 1907, and became the Board of Foreign Missions. Cf. *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society* and *Annual Reports of the Board of Foreign Missions*

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his judgment best for the interests of the whole work. So much centralization of power gave marvellous efficiency in some directions to the new mission where much needed to be promptly done, and yet was inevitably attended with great liability to friction on the part of those who chafed under its personal inconveniences. A somewhat more democratic system was accordingly from the first kept in view.¹

3. Organization.

1. As soon as the number of missionaries and Indian workers justified the practice Dr. Butler began to hold annual meetings of the Mission. While these had no legislative or administrative authority, since the missionaries held their Conference relationship with American Annual Conferences and Dr. Butler had supreme authority in India, yet such meetings were nevertheless profitable for consultation and for the unification of the work. The first of these Annual Meetings was held in Bareilly on August 20, 1858. It was attended by William Butler, J. L. Humphrey, Ralph Pierce, Samuel Knowles, Joel Janvier, and another Indian helper.² In anticipation of the arrival of a new band of missionaries Dr. Butler announced an Annual Meeting of the Mission to take place at Lucknow on September 4, 1859.³ Thirteen names were entered upon the roll of mission workers, nine ordained missionaries from America, three Englishmen who had joined the Mission in India, and one National.⁴ From the time of this

¹James Mudge, *Historical Sketch of the Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Lucknow, 1877), p. 102. That "friction" did occur occasionally may be assumed from an entry in the Minutes of the Missionary Society of December 21, 1859, recording the "communications of several Brethren of the Mission jointly, dated September 1859, and Brother Baume, dated September 30, 1859, in opposition to the purpose and plans of the Superintendent proposed to the Mission at its Annual Meeting in Lucknow in regard to accepting a 'grant-in-aid' from the Government." Dr. Reid hints at the same thing in his reference to the "young men who had entered upon their mission with most decided convictions" (Reid and Gracey, *op. cit.*, II, 292).

²Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

³James Baume, Charles W. Judd, James W. Waugh, Joseph R. Downey, Edwin W. Parker and James M. Thoburn (*Ibid.*, p. 47).

⁴Josiah Parsons and James A. Cawdell, both Englishmen, had joined the Mission before this date. Numerous histories of Methodist Missions have recorded this as the first of four "Annual Meetings," but Scott seems to be correct in recognizing the informal meeting of August 20, 1858 as an Annual Meeting. Yet the meeting a year later may be considered in some sense the formal organization of the Mission into an "Annual Meeting."

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meeting it was increasingly felt that this type of ecclesiastical organization was far from satisfactory. Even this meeting had its stormy moments:

The majority of the men were members of Annual Conferences in America¹ and had been pastors of churches there, and were considerably annoyed and embarrassed by the new regime under which they found they had little or no authority in the administration of affairs, for the deliberations and discussions of the Conference could end in no conclusions not subject to the sanction and approval of the authorities at home, whose representative was present in the person of the Superintendent. The rapid increase in the missionary force, and the intricate and perplexing problems, such as the reception of members, nature of work to be undertaken, place and amount of educational work to be opened, diversion of evangelists to educational work, and the differences of opinion on many important topics which arose in the discussion, all led to a growing desire for a properly constituted Annual Conference.²

The Second Annual Meeting of the Mission convened in Bareilly on February 1, 1861. Three American missionaries had arrived since the last meeting, and six native ministers had been added to the body. The Annual Meeting began to assume the form of an Annual Conference, but several of the members continued to chafe under the defective disciplinary powers of the organization. Among the important matters discussed were the salaries of Indian ministers, a fund for superannuated native helpers, a printing press for the Mission, a course of study for the Indian ministers, whether English should be taught in the schools and orphanages, and whether unmarried women missionaries should be employed in the work of the Mission.³

There was no other Annual Meeting until February 5, 1863. Since the last meeting eight more missionaries had arrived from

¹The ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church are organized into various Annual Conferences. The basis of allocation of membership is geographical. Till 1864 all Methodist ministers who went out from the United States as missionaries retained their membership in the "home" conferences. Those accepted as ministers in India were "put on trial" in one of the American Annual Conferences. Ordination of ministers, their appointment to their work, and their trial in case of unsatisfactory conduct all rest with the Annual Conferences.

²Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

³Reid and Gracey, *op. cit.*, II, 413.

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America. There were now nineteen American and three English missionaries and a number of Indian workers. Beside the routine business of the Mission, other matters discussed included the future management of the Mission, the arrangements for the physical comfort of the missionaries and their families, and the education of the children of missionaries.¹

The last Annual Meeting convened in Bareilly on February 10, 1864. The desire that the Mission be organized into an Annual Conference had continued to grow, and at this meeting a memorial was prepared and forwarded to the ensuing General Conference petitioning that the work in India might be granted the status of an Annual Conference. Dr. Butler presented an exhaustive report of the achievements of the Mission during the years of his Superintendency, and gave official notice of his resignation from that office.²

2. Probably the most significant event of the year 1864 was the organization of the "India Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Although Dr. Durbin had looked forward to the organization of a Mission Conference in India,³ and Dr. Butler had probably shaped his programme to that end, the authorities in America were somewhat impatient when the missionaries began to ask that an Annual Conference be organized in India.

They forgot that under the Methodist system it was necessary to set up an organization which would provide for the various emergencies which might arise. For instance, a minister could not be put on his trial without transferring the case to America, which is tantamount to saying that he could not be fairly tried at all. Candidates for the ministry had to be admitted on trial into Annual Conferences in America.⁴

¹Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

²*Ibid.*, p. 76.

³RMS, XLII (1861), 45.

⁴An example was the case of Josiah Parsons, concerning whom the Corresponding Secretary reported, "Brother Butler having obtained highly satisfactory testimonials of him in India, sent forward to the Church in America the papers requisite for his admission into some conference on trial, that he might be regularly stationed in the mission. Upon these papers, under the advice and direction of Bishop Waugh, he was admitted on trial at the last session of the Northwestern Indiana Conference, then transferred to the New York Conference, and appointed as assistant in the mission in India" (RMS, XXXIX [1858], 59).

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The Church in America could hardly appreciate the needs and problems of those on the fields.¹

The memorial from the India Mission was presented to the General Conference of 1864 on May 7.² On the eleventh the Committee on Missions presented its report, which contained the resolution that the Foreign Missions of the Church should be organized into Annual Conferences so soon as their condition render such organization proper, and that this General Conference should organize the Missions in India into a Mission Annual Conference.³ After some debate the General Conference adopted the action that:—

There shall be an Annual Conference in the northwest provinces of India, to be denominated the INDIA MISSION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, embracing the ancient kingdom of Oudh, and the country of Rohilkhand on the west of Oudh, and lying between the river Ganges on the south and the Himalaya Mountains on the north, which Conference shall, with the concurrence of the presiding bishop, possess all the rights, powers, and privileges of other Annual Conferences, excepting that of sending delegates to General Conference, and of drawing its annual dividend from the avails of the Book Concern and Chartered Fund, and of voting on constitutional changes proposed in the Discipline.⁴

The India Mission Conference was organized in Lucknow by Bishop Edward Thompson on December 6, 1864. Previous to this action the work in India had been technically only a Mission—the India Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church—but with the organization of the work into an Annual Conference, according to Methodist polity, there now came into existence “The Methodist Episcopal Church.”

4. Motives for Founding the Mission

In our own day the question of the motive with which a mission is organized and prosecuted has assumed such importance that consideration should be given to the ideals with which the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church opened its

¹Thoburn, *India and Malaysia*, p. 254.

²JGC, XIV (1864), 83.

³*Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 219.

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work in India. This can perhaps best be done by quoting from certain official documents. In the Annual Report of the Missionary Society for 1854 the general purpose of the Society is stated: "The object of the said Corporation is to diffuse more generally the blessings of education, civilization, and Christianity throughout the United States and elsewhere."¹ In the same volume is contained the Thirty-fourth Report of the Missionary Society. Here it was noted that "a mission was authorized in India, that we might take part with the Evangelical Churches of Europe and America in overthrowing that horrid and cruel system of Paganism which lies like a pall over that vast and beautiful world."² In the Report of the Missionary Society for 1856 the Corresponding Secretary indicates that appropriations have been made for the institution of a mission in India. "This was done," said he, "under the conviction that the Methodist Episcopal Church ought to take a part with her sister Churches in subverting the empire of Paganism in India, and establishing in its place the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."³

In the "Letter of Instructions" (Part vi, p. 4) given to Dr. Butler by the Board of Managers was the statement: "If there be a European population present in the country or city in which you establish our mission, and the mission can be made to serve their spiritual interests, we shall consent and be glad; provided such service does not interfere with the execution of your mission among the heathen."⁴ But when the Missionary Society met on November 5, 1858, it instructed Dr. Butler to provide sufficient residences for a group of new missionaries who were being sent out, and cautioned him that "it is understood that in the quality and location of the Buildings reference shall be had chiefly to the main intent of the Mission, viz: the conversion of the Natives of the Country, and only incidentally to the European population in India."⁵ This warning was probably occasioned by the fact that

¹RMS, XXXV (1854), 5.

²*Ibid.*, p. 17.

³*Ibid.*, XXXVII (1856), 47.

⁴*Ibid.*, XLIII (1862), 19.

⁵MMS, VI, 223.

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in Naini Tal, Lucknow, and Bareilly the missionaries, while learning the vernaculars and securing Indian assistants in order to undertake work among the non-Christians, had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the work among English officials and soldiers. Again, in 1864, while authorizing an appropriation of \$100 for medicines to be used by the Reverend T. S. Johnson, M. D., the Board of Managers adopted the resolution, "That the Board does not intend by the foregoing resolution to encourage the practice of Medicine to prejudice the primary work of our Mission, the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen."¹ It is evident that the Missionary Society had little sympathy with the "Social Gospel." Its primary interest was in evangelism through the preaching of the word.

The attitude of Dr. Butler is probably well summarized in the "True Theory of Missions" which he included in his annual report to the Society in 1861:

Truly it is said in the missionary column of the *Christian Advocate* for June 27, (this day come to hand), that "it is not necessary to send out missionaries to India in sufficient numbers to preach the Gospel to all the people but only to send out missionaries who shall, under God, be the instruments of raising up and training a native ministry.".....No foreign ministry can expect to convert all these millions around us, nor can we remain here permanently as their pastors. We can only commence this work, raise up a native ministry to carry it on, direct their labours and church organization for a while, and then, when God shall give them success, when Churches are multiplied, and the power of numbers begins to be felt, let them be invested with the entire responsibility, and we may withdraw to devote our labours and resources to other unevangelized portions of the world. This seems to me the true theory, at which we should aim from the very commencement of our plans, and hence it is not too early to mention it.²

This statement is in harmony with the present day emphasis on self-control in the National Church. That Dr. Butler had a wide view of the aims of Christian missions is indicated by the fact that he encouraged education, self-support, wide use of Christian literature, economic independence of Christian converts, medical

¹*MMS*, VI, p. 506.

²*RMS*, XLII (1862), 25.

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missions, work among women, care of orphans, and similar enterprises.

The Missionary Society also produced its "Theory and Practice of Missions." On September 21, 1864, "in answer to a letter from Bishop Thompson in which he asked advice in relation to the Administration of the Finances of our Mission in India," a detailed set of instructions was adopted. This document concluded:

You will doubtless observe in these instructions, that the main object and work of a Christian Mission, that is the *preaching* of the Gospel by means of *living* Ministers and Agents, is kept steadily in view; and that all other means and appliances of a Mission are only auxiliary to the principal object. Hence we instruct you to provide for the comfortable support of all Missionary Ministers and helpers in preaching the Word, and under our present financial embarrassments, to curtail as far as may be done safely, the expenditures in all auxiliary departments.

These views of Missions have been fully and freely expressed to all our foreign missions, and constitute our theory and practice of Missions.¹

5. Butler's Plan of Concentration of Forces

Possibly no question of missionary policy concerns the modern missionary statesman more acutely than that of the deployment of missionary forces. There are some missionary leaders who insist that the only wise policy is a careful concentration of missionaries in a relatively small area; there are others who advocate a wide dispersion of missionary forces. At the time the India Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church was established the former policy commended itself to Methodist leaders. "It seemed to the Church in America as well as to most missionaries in India that the plan of locating twenty-five men in one comparatively small section of the great Empire of India was an exceedingly wise one, and that such a mission would, in proportion to its extent, be among the most strongly manned in all the country."²

On March 10, 1857, Dr. Butler sent to the Missionary Society his carefully worked out plan for the Mission in India. It provided for a force of twenty-five male missionaries occupying

¹MMS, VI, 512.

²Thoburn, *India*, pp. 249 f.

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six central stations. It was intended that no less than eight missionaries should be located in the city of Lucknow, which was to be the centre of the Mission. Four missionaries were to be stationed in each of the cities of Bareilly and Moradabad. Two other cities were to have three missionaries each, while the remaining stations chosen were each to have two missionaries.¹ Reference to a map of the Province of Oudh and that part of the Province of Rohilkhand which it was proposed to occupy will indicate that judged by the standards of the time the area would indeed be well manned. In 1860 Dr. Butler sent an impassioned appeal for the remainder of the twenty-five men required in his plan:

I assure the committee, this subject is not one of merely personal feeling. Arranged as our work now is, (and no curtailment of it can now be attempted without public dishonour), the question of these required reinforcements being sent, and sent promptly, is one that vitally affects the great objects of your mission.....I have already said that we merely *hold* the ground; but we do not *work* it. You have chosen this field. It has gone forth, not only in India, but to Christendom, that the Great Methodist Episcopal Church has resolved to bend her energies to work her field in an efficient and powerful manner. Dr. Duff has said to Europe that your reinforcements are "first-rate men for their work," and that you will increase their number to twenty-four, and has applauded your wisdom in resolving to work your mission in the only way in which a mission in India can hope to be largely successful, that is, "by taking a given section of the country and *manning it strongly*." He holds up your example to the Christian Churches, and bids them watch the results.....Without doubt you have the finest field in India on which to try the grand experiment, and God and man will expect us to work it, and to work it well.²

While agreeing with the principle, the Missionary Society did not find it possible to send out the men to carry on "the grand experiment" as rapidly as Dr. Butler desired. Upon receipt of Butler's plan of March 10, 1857, the Corresponding Secretary intimated to the Board.

what in his judgment should be the policy of our mission in India and read as he had written to that Mission on the subject,

¹Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²*RMS*, XLII, 45 f.

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dissuading from the expectation of such rapid increase of laborers and the extension of the work. The Board approved of the Secretary's judgment in the case.¹

This policy of concentration of efforts characterized the programme of the Mission to a large extent as long as Butler was Superintendent. Bishop Thompson came to India in 1864 to organize the India Mission Conference. On the advice of Bishop Thompson the missionaries at that first Annual Conference voted to enlarge their field by planting a mission in the Province of Garhwal, another at Gonda in Eastern Oudh, and a third at Rae-Bareilly in Southern Oudh. By this action the first field chosen by Dr. Butler was extended so as to include the whole of Oudh, and also the district of Garhwal.² In 1870 the Methodist Episcopal Mission broke its bounds and crossed the Ganges—the "Indian Rubicon" as Bishop Thoburn called it, and entered the principal cities of India. This was largely due to the influence and evangelistic preaching of William Taylor. This new departure from the policy of concentration created innumerable problems for the Missionary Society and for the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.

At the close of the India Mission Conference of 1864 Dr. William Butler severed his official connection with the India Mission. Early in 1865 he left India to take up duties in America, and later, to open the Mission in Mexico. The debt of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India and in America to the first Superintendent of the India Mission is great. Bishop Thompson no doubt expressed the sentiment of Methodism when he said:

By his selection of a field, choice of stations, management of finances, and general oversight of the work, he evinced eminent abilities. He was the man for the work—prudent, pious, sagacious, with a courteous bearing, a just self-respect, an enterprising spirit, and a profound regard to the authorities by whom he was commissioned.³

With the organization of the India Mission Conference the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India entered upon a new era.

¹MMS, VI, 136.

²Thoburn, *India*, p. 278.

³Scot, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

CHAPTER II

Territorial Expansion of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1864-1888.

RAPID territorial expansion characterized the second period of Methodist history in India. Under the Superintendency of William Butler the work had been confined to the Provinces of Oudh and Rohilkhand, with the single exception of the missionary activities carried on in the vicinity of Naini Tal, which had been entered during the days of the mutiny. But in 1888 Methodist Episcopal Churches were to be found in all parts of India, and in Burma and Malaysia as well. In 1864 there was one Annual Conference and three Districts of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India; in 1888 there were three Annual Conferences comprising ten Districts.¹ In his final report to the Mission in 1864, Dr. Butler noted that nine important cities had been occupied. At the close of this period of expansion Methodist Episcopal Churches had been established in forty-nine important cities of India and Burma, as well as in a number of smaller cities and towns.²

1. History of Methodism's Expansion.

1. The first movement of the Church out of the original field, other than the station in Naini Tal, came in 1864 when Colonel Ramsey, the Commissioner of Kumaon and Garhwal, requested Bishop Thompson to send a missionary to Pauri. He offered to give \$1,500 for the erection of a missionary residence and \$300 a month for the current expenses of the mission, and asked that James M. Thoburn be appointed to this work. The India Mission Conference recommended that this proposal be accepted, and the work was soon begun.³ The

¹The North India, South India, and Bengal Annual Conferences, and the Kumaon, Oudh, Amroha, Rohilkhand, Bombay, Madras, Ajmere, Burma, Calcutta, and Mussoorie Districts.

²See the list of Appointments printed in the *Minutes of the Thirteenth Session of the South India Conference* (Madras: M. E. Mission Press, 1889).

³R.M.S., XLVI (1865), 94 f.

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same Conference authorized the establishment of work in Gonda and Rae Bareilly, in the Province of Oudh.

But until the year 1870, while the matter was sometimes discussed, there was very little serious thought on the part of most of the missionaries of ever passing beyond the boundaries of the one-language mission field selected by William Butler in 1856.¹ By the year 1870, however, a number of the Methodist missionaries had become convinced that they could not much longer confine their work to the original field.² They were restrained, nevertheless, by the generally accepted rules of comity which prevented one Mission from beginning work in a territory already occupied by another. Since the American Presbyterians had work on the west side of the Ganges, this river had served as a boundary line between the two Missions. The Methodist missionaries hesitated to "trespass" upon the territory of the Presbyterians, with whom cordial relations had existed.³

But James M. Thoburn, who became known in India and America as the advocate of the policy of expansion, chafed under the restrictions. He felt that the policy of the Missionary Society had been provincial rather than imperial. They thought of planting a Mission *in* India rather than *for* India as a whole. The Methodist Episcopal Church should have its part in making India a Christian Empire. The rules of Mission comity had not proved successful. They created more suspicion than they prevented. The unwritten rules of comity which apply in America and other Christian lands would bring good results in India. Methodism had as important a mission to play in India as have the Church of England and Roman Catholicism. Thoburn was seeking some opportunity to enter the territory west and south of the Ganges.⁴

¹Other cities within this area were occupied during this period, viz., Pilibhit, in 1864; Sambhal, in 1865; Bahraich, in 1867.

²Thoburn, *India*, p. 292.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 255-60.

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The opportunity came to him unexpectedly one Saturday in 1870 when he was invited to preach to a small congregation meeting in a Union Chapel in Cawnpore. This important city is on the west side of the Ganges, about fifty miles from Lucknow, and outside the territory in which the Methodist missionaries had been at work. A petition was later sent by the little congregation requesting the Methodists to supply them with a pastor. Missionaries from Lucknow began preaching regularly in Cawnpore, though, as yet, no one was appointed to take up his residence in that city. In undertaking this work two important precedents in Mission policy were altered. First, the Methodist Episcopal Church definitely crossed its original boundary, and second, it began a work confined to English-speaking people.¹

2. It was just at this time that William Taylor, the California evangelist whose evangelistic services in South Africa had excited such wide interest, arrived in India. In 1863 the Reverend J. Smith, a Baptist missionary, had urged him to make an evangelistic tour in India, and the year following, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society had made a similar request.² In 1868 J. M. Thoburn invited him to conduct services within the bounds of the India Mission Conference.³ This was part of his policy of expansion, for he wrote: "I sketched a plan for getting him out to India and having him open our way to all the great cities of the empire by preaching in English to the English-speaking people."⁴

William Taylor arrived in Lucknow on November 25, 1870, and began his evangelistic services on Sunday, the twenty-seventh. On the following Tuesday he took a step which marked an era in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. Previous to this missionaries had preached to English-speaking congregations whenever opportunity offered, but they

¹Thoburn, *India*, pp. 292-94. Thoburn, *My Missionary Apprenticeship* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1886), pp. 274-77.

²William Taylor, *Four Years' Campaign in India* (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1875), p. 1.

³*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴Thoburn, *Apprenticeship*, p. 279.

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had never invited Europeans or Anglo-Indians to become members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Most of these were members or nominal members of the Church of England or of the Roman Catholic Church. William Taylor was not a man, however, who was over-zealous in observing the various rules of comity.¹ He now gave the invitation to the "converts" to unite with the Methodist Church. This action, says Thoburn, committed the Church irrevocably to work among the English-speaking people of India.²

On December 9 Taylor received an invitation from Dr. Moffat, M. D., of Cawnpore, asking him to preach in that city. The missionaries in Lucknow were consulted.

The brethren expressed themselves freely—some for my going and others against it. It was urged against it, that Cawnpore was outside of our Conference boundaries, and we had no right to go there; but that was met by Mr. Wesley's saying, "The world is my parish," and by the fact that Brother Thoburn had already preached there several times. One urged that if we should get converts there we had no money nor employment for them. I said, "I never heard of the like before"; and it was finally agreed that if I would not commit the Mission to any responsibility in regard to Cawnpore, I might go.³

After Taylor had been preaching in Cawnpore for nearly a month two "fellowship bands" were formed. These presented a petition to the India Mission Conference, requesting that Cawnpore be put on the list of appointments, and promised eighty rupees per month for the support of a missionary. Just previous to this a Methodist Church had been organized, Taylor having ascertained that the Presbyterians and Baptists had no intention of organizing congregations in Cawnpore.⁴ The process of expansion was now under way. Thoburn had assisted Taylor in the organization of the Church.

The Cawnpore petition precipitated a heated discussion at the session of the Annual Conference which convened at

¹Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17, 22-23.

²Thoburn, *Apprenticeship*, p. 282.

³Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 32-40.

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Lucknow on January 12, 1871. Representatives of other Missions, including the Presbyterian, who were present were consulted. No objections were raised to the proposal to establish Methodist work in Cawnpore.¹ At last it was

resolved to organize Churches in all places where converted persons sought for Church fellowship, provided such persons have been converted under the ministry of this Church. This proviso will guard against any more proselytism, and will also prevent any complications with other Missions. It was also resolved to open evangelistic missions in Bombay and Bengal, provided clear indications of God's will should be manifested pointing towards those fields. To this was also added a proviso that these missions be purely evangelistic, and that no native helpers be employed in them save those raised up from among the converts and supported by their contributions.²

In 1872 the Conference adopted a "Special Report on the Extension of the Work" which embodied the action of the previous year, with an additional clause which called upon the Presiding Elders to put into effect the resolutions adopted.³

After a tour of the India Mission Conference which occupied most of the year 1871 William Taylor began his work in Bombay. Here he carried on evangelistic services at the invitation of the American Marathi Mission, especially for Indians. Not a few Europeans and Anglo-Indians also attended the meetings, and he was encouraged to arrange for a series of English services in Institution Hall, in connection with the school of the Free Church of Scotland.⁴ From these meetings a number of "fellowship bands" developed. The story of Cawnpore was repeated in Bombay. Various entries in the diary of William Taylor indicate how the conviction grew upon him that the "bands" should be organized into a Methodist Episcopal Church.⁵ Finally, on February 8, 1872, members of the fellowship bands presented a petition to Mr. Taylor requesting him to organize

¹Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43.

²*RMS.*, LIII (1871), 95.

³*Minutes of the India Mission Conference* (Lucknow: American Methodist Press, 1872), VII, 56. Cited hereafter as *MIMC*.

⁴Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 114, 130, 133, 142-43, 146, 148.

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them into a Methodist Church. On the fourteenth Taylor published a long reply in the *Bombay Guardian* in which he traced the history of his work in Bombay, the circumstances leading to the decision to establish a Church, and his purpose that the organization should be self-supporting and Missionary in character, though entirely disassociated from the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church.¹

Under very similar circumstances William Taylor, or those working under his direction, established Churches in Poona, in October, 1872; in Calcutta, in April, 1873; in Madras, Bangalore, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Jubbulpore, and Nagpur, all in 1874.² Thus, within the principal cities of South India only ten years after the organization of the India Mission Conference there were to be found ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Additional cities in North India were also being entered by Methodist workers. A Church was organized in Allahabad in 1873, in Eastern Kumaon and Palee in 1874, and Rangoon in 1879.³

As might have been expected this policy of rapid territorial expansion aroused some misgivings and some protests both in India and in America. But two of the most eloquent and influential missionaries of the Church were leaders in this movement, and Taylor and Thoburn soon won the enthusiastic support of the Church. Thoburn employed his pen effectively in India,⁴ and Taylor's *Four Years' Campaign in India* acquainted American readers with the fundamentals of his "Pauline Method of Missionary Work."

Thus, in William Butler and James M. Thoburn are to be seen two differing philosophies of Missions. Butler's theory dominated Methodist Episcopal Missionary policy for the first eight or ten years' of the Mission, that of Thoburn has guided very largely until recent years. But voices of protest have been

¹Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-54.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 235, 272, 313, 323. See also Badley, *op. cit.*, pp. 235, 262, 292, 297, 312, 330, 339.

³*MIMC*, IX, 29. See also Badley, *op. cit.*, pp. 280, 431.

⁴See his report in *MIMC*, VII, 15 f. Also articles in *Lucknow Witness*.

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raised from time to time. One of the earliest to "re-think" the Missionary Policy of Methodist in India was J. H. Messmore. Writing in the volume which commemorated the India Mission Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia, he said of the North India Conference :

The Conference has suffered serious loss on account of the great expansion of the work of the Missionary Society in India and elsewhere. Fields that were cleared and sown during the first two decades have reverted to jungle during the last three. The Church is of course at liberty to choose where her missions shall be located. But when plans for work in Oudh and Rohilkhand were adopted and made public, there was an implied promise to carry out those plans to a reasonable degree of completion. We missionaries have been disappointed, our Indian brethren have been disappointed, and, in many cases, Hindus and Mohammedans have been disappointed, because the promises of early days have not been fulfilled. . . . We sympathize with those whose watchword is the evangelization of India in this generation ; yet we know that such a triumph is impossible.¹

The effects of the policy of expansion were especially noticeable at those times when financial difficulties in America made it necessary for the Missionary Society to restrict the number of new missionaries for work in India.²

2. Organizational Development

1. The development of the ecclesiastical organizations of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India reflect the influence of

1. J. H. Messmore, "The Story of the North India Conference," *India Mission Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, ed. F. B. Price (Calcutta: Methodist Publishing House, 1907), pp. 161 f.

2. For example, the Report for the Bareilly Station for 1866 deplors the fact that the Missionary staff in that city, which was intended by Butler to be one of the best manned, was so inadequate that the work was being done ineffectively (*Second Annual Report of the India Mission Conference* [Lucknow, 1866], p. 5). In 1871 J. M. Thoburn reported concerning the Lucknow District, which was intended to be the stronghold of Methodism in India, "Our work in Oudh has suffered during the past year, on account of the weakening of our Missionary force. Three of our stations, comprising almost one half the field occupied by us in Oudh, have been without resident missionaries, and the result which might have been anticipated is seen in the decrease of members and inquirers in two of those stations" (*MIMC*, VII [1871], p. 16).

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the rapid expansion which characterized the period from 1864 to 1888. The India Mission was organized, by the authorization of the General Conference,¹ into a Mission Conference in 1864. The First Session convened in Lucknow, December 8, 1864. After conducting the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Bishop Edward Thompson read a paper stating the action of the General Conference, and recognized seventeen ministers as members of the India Mission Conference. After an address by Bishop Thompson² the Conference was organized. J. T. Gracey was elected Secretary and T.J. Scott Assistant Secretary. Among the important actions taken by the Conference were the decision to undertake work in Garhwal, the plan to add a training school for preachers and teachers to the programme of the orphanage, the adoption of a course of study for native preachers, and various measures relating to the work of the schools and the Mission Press.³ The Conference was asked to elect by ballot a Committee, later called the "Committee on Missions," whose duty was to prepare the annual budget and manage the finances of the Church. It was understood that the members of this committee would also serve as Presiding Elders.⁴ James W. Waugh, Charles W. Judd, and Edwin W. Parker were elected and assigned to the Bareilly, Lucknow, and Moradabad Districts, respectively.

An action of historic significance was the admission On Trial of four Indian ministers: Joel T. Janvier, Henry M. Daniel, Zahur-ul-Haqq, and Joseph Fieldbrave. By this fact the Conference determined that in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India, Indian ministers were to have equal dignity, privilege, and responsibility with those who were sent out from America or Europe. Janvier and Daniel were elected to Deacons' Orders, and were ordained by Bishop Thompson.⁵

The fact that the ecclesiastical organization set up by the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India was

¹*JGC*, XIV (1864), 138.

²Printed in full in *JGC*, XV (1868), 394-406.

³Reid and Gracey, *op. cit.*, III, 10.

⁴Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 f.

⁵Reid and Gracey, *op. cit.*, III, 10.

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patterned after that of the Church in America has produced significant results in two opposing directions. On the one hand, it has given to the Indian ministry the dignity and freedom enjoyed by ministers from abroad. In the Methodist polity all members of a Conference have equal rights of speaking and voting on all questions which may be under consideration. Theoretically, at least, the feature of the "Church-Mission" organization, which reserves to the Mission the right to make the more important decisions, is eliminated. Each minister is responsible for his conduct to a Conference composed of Indians as well as of Americans. On the other hand, the fact that the American type of organization was set up in India has probably hindered to some extent the natural and free development of an indigenous Church. In 1861 it had been reported to the Missionary Society: "As fast as circumstances have allowed all the institutions and usages of our Church have been introduced into every mission."¹ But as early as 1878 a Committee reported to the North India Conference:

Your Committee submit for careful thought whether it may not be possible that a too rigid adherence to things non-essential in merely social life and forms of worship and Church order, we do not obstruct a spontaneous and indigenous strength and elasticity that might be conserved among those whom we are gathering into the Church. While holding on to all that is vital and best in our form of Church organization in our traditional modes of work and worship, may we not well study this question as wise master-builders?²

Fortunately, the willingness on the part of the General Conference to give larger and larger authority to the "Central Conference," organized in 1885, and to be considered later, has allowed a larger amount of freedom to the Church in India than was originally contemplated when the India Mission Conference was organized.

The missionaries in India had looked forward eagerly to the time when the work would be organized into a Mission Conference, for they had not been pleased with the centralization

¹*RMS*, XLII (1861), 37.

²*MNIC*, 1878, p. 65.

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of power and responsibility which existed under the Superintendency of William Butler. But they were sorely disappointed when they learned of the restrictions which the General Conference had formulated when granting their request for a Conference. They could not legislate without the official sanction of the Bishop presiding. They could not send delegates to the General Conference, nor vote on constitutional changes in the Book of Discipline. Nor could they draw dividends from the Book Concern and the Chartered Fund as other Conferences did. The missionaries strongly protested against having their ecclesiastical rights thus restricted, and drew up a second memorial to the General Conference. The General Conference of 1868 recognized the justice of the protest, and removed all restrictions, and announced that the Mission Conference of India is "hereby declared to be an Annual Conference, endowed with all the rights, privileges, and immunities usual to Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."¹ John T. Gracey, who had been sent to the General Conference as a representative of the India Mission Conference, was admitted to membership in the General Conference as a delegate from the India Annual Conference.² It was decided, however, that the Missionary interests of the Conference would be administered as before, its relation to the Missionary Society being continued as a Foreign Mission.³

It is unnecessary at this time to review in detail the actions of subsequent sessions of the India Mission Conference.⁴ Certain of the more significant developments will be considered later.

2. The work under William Taylor created new problems for the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. The India

¹*JGC*, XV (1868), 282.

²*Ibid.* It is to be noted that the name of the Conference now became the "India Annual Conference."

³*Ibid.*

⁴See, Reid and Gracey, *op. cit.*, III, 17-52; Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-123; Messmore, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-60; *Minutes of India Mission Conference*, and *Minutes of India Annual Conference*; *Minutes of the North India Annual Conference*.

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Annual Conference still depended on the Missionary Society to send out and support the missionaries at work within its bounds, and to supply a considerable portion of the funds necessary to prosecute its evangelistic and educational programme. But Taylor determined from the outset to organize his work independently of the Missionary Society. His first thought seems to have been that there should be no ecclesiastical connection with the India Annual Conference, for in a communication to the General Conference of 1872 he said: "Moradabad, the seat of our recent session of the India Mission Conference, is about 1,400 miles distant: hence this Mission cannot in reason be appended to that Conference."¹ In this same communication he requested the General Conference "to grant a charter for the organization of a Bombay Conference—not a Mission Conference."² But the General Conference did not comply with his request. Taylor was of the opinion that the Methodist polity was the most satisfactory known to him, so desired that the ministers of his independent churches should be ordained Methodist ministers. Thus it came about that the missionaries sent out to work in the Churches organized by Taylor were appointed to membership in the India Annual Conference.³ Those who entered the ministry in India were received On Trial in this Conference. The work outside the original limits of the territory selected by Butler was organized as a district with William Taylor as its Presiding Elder.

In 1873 Bishop William Harris came to India to visit the churches and to preside at the Annual Conference. Upon his arrival in Calcutta he conferred with Taylor and Thoburn concerning the work in South India. Bishop Harris had been

¹Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

²*Ibid.*, p. 167.

³As soon as the congregation had been organized in Bombay Taylor, in a letter to Bishop Janes, who had Episcopal Supervision of India, requested that the Missionary Society send out two missionaries to become pastors of the Bombay churches. For it was agreed that although their salaries should be paid by the congregations which they served it would be necessary for the Society to select and send out the missionaries needed for work in the South India churches.

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led to fear that Taylor purposed to establish an independent Church. He proposed that all the missionary activity outside the bounds of the India Annual Conference be organized into a Mission Conference, with William Taylor as its Superintendent. It was agreed that all the ministers should join the India Annual Conference, but that this Conference would no more dictate the policies and programme of the new Mission than the American Conferences had controlled the early India Mission. The name selected for the new organization was the "Bombay and Bengal Mission." At the session of the India Annual Conference, which met in Lucknow in January, 1874, the formal action required to set up the Bombay and Bengal Mission was taken. Ten members of Conference were appointed to work in the Mission. The work was divided into four districts: Bombay, the Deccan, Central India, and Bengal. James. M. Thoburn, who had resigned his salary from the Missionary Society the year before, was appointed to Calcutta.¹

3. The appointments of the India Annual Conference of 1875 indicate that new territory had been entered during the year, for missionaries are appointed this year to the "Bombay, Bengal, and Madras Mission." Madras, Baroda, and Scind appear for the first time in the list of appointments.² The Annual Conference of 1876 petitioned the General Conference to organize two Annual Conferences in India,³ and this request was granted. Action was taken to set up two Conferences: the North India Conference, which was to include the Province of Oudh, and the Districts of Rohilkhand, Cawnpore, Kumaon, and Garhwal in the North-west Province, and the South India Conference, which was to include all those parts of India not embraced in the North India Conference.⁴

The South India Annual Conference was organized on November 9, 1876, in Bombay by Bishop Edward G. Andrews.

¹Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-96.

²*Minutes of the India Annual Conference* (Lucknow, 1875), p. 63
Cited hereafter as *MIAC*.

³*Ibid.*, 1876, p. 68.

⁴*JGC*, XVII (1876), 300.

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Twenty-three members were enrolled. The Conference was divided into three Districts: Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.¹ The work had expanded so rapidly that in 1879 a new District, the Allahabad, was formed,² and in 1884 the Burma and Central India Districts were constituted.³ In 1887 the names of the Allahabad and Central India Districts were changed to Mussoori and Ajmere, respectively.⁴

The enormous distances that must be travelled by members in order to attend the sessions of the Annual Conference, and the rapid extension of the work and increase in the number of workers, caused the South India Conference of 1879-80 to instruct its delegate to the General Conference of 1880 to endeavor to secure permission to divide the Conference into two Annual Conferences.⁵ It was not until 1884, however, that this permission was given by the General Conference and the Bengal Annual Conference was authorized.⁶ At the session of the Central Conference of Southern Asia held in Bombay in February, 1887, Bishop Ninde concurred in the adoption of the report of the Committee on Boundaries in defining the Bengal Conference as "consisting of Bengal and the portions of India not included in the North and South India Conferences with Burma and the Straits Settlement."⁷ The first session of the Bengal Conference convened on January 13, 1888.

4. During the period from 1864 to 1888 the Methodist Church in India worked out the plan of the Conference Relations of its ministers which has remained essentially unchanged till the present. In the memorial adopted by the India Conference of 1871 concerning the death of Bishop Thompson are the significant words:

We believe that the policy initiated by him here, of organizing mixed Conference in which race or colour were ignored,

¹*Minutes of the South India Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Madras, 1876.) p. 14. Cited hereafter as *MSIC*.

²*Ibid.*, 1879-80, p. 10.

³*Ibid.*, 1884, p. 15.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1886-87, pp. 17 f.

⁵*Ibid.*, 1879-80, p. 7.

⁶*JGC*, XIX (1884), 345.

⁷Reid and Gracey, *op. cit.*, III, 150.

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exerted a most important influence on our Church at home, and we feel thankful that our little Conference was accorded the signal honor of pioneering the way in this advance movement.¹

In adopting this policy Bishop Thompson had gone contrary to a large body of public opinion in America. James M. Thoburn was present at the session of the General Conference when the authorization of the Mission Conference in India, with the restrictive clauses, was adopted. The principal reason for giving to the presiding Bishop veto power, a power which he did not possess in the American Conferences, was the belief that the influx of native preachers would be so great, that in a very short time they would control the Conference, and it was assumed that they would certainly be more or less unfit for the responsibilities of Conference Membership. Thoburn attempted to explain to Dr. Durbin, the Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society, the mistake which was being made, but to no avail. At that time it seemed to be the general sentiment in the American Church that a too rapid increase in the Indian membership in the Conference would be viewed unfavourably, and this had its effect upon the actions of the missionaries in India. When the recommendation of the Bareilly Quarterly Conference that Joel Janvier be admitted into the India Conference was presented, a discussion arose among the missionaries as to the expediency of admitting native members to the Conference at all. After the discussion it was voted to admit him on trial. Bishop Thompson readily gave his consent. But from the first the deliberate policy was adopted of admitting only a few representative Nationals into the Conference, while the rest were placed in the nominal relationship of Local Preachers or Exhorters. As a consequence the criticism was soon made in America that Nationals were not being admitted into Conference membership in India as rapidly as in China. Thoburn considers that this unfortunate hesitancy at the outset retarded the normal development of an Indian ministry for twenty years or more.²

¹*MIA C*, 1871, p. 46.

²Thoburn, *Apprenticeship*, pp. 109-11.

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The India Conference of 1864 admitted four Nationals into membership On Trial: Joel T. Janvier, Henry Martyn Daniel, Joseph Fieldbrave, and Zahur-ul-Haqq. James A Cawdell, an Englishman who had joined the Mission during the superintendency of Butler, was also admitted On Trial. At this same Conference Cawdell, Janvier, Daniel, and Samuel Knowles were ordained deacons, and Knowles was at the same time ordained an elder.¹ The Second Session of the India Conference, meeting in February 1866, continued Janvier, Fieldbrave, Daniel, Zahur-ul-Haqq and Cawdell On Trial, and instructed them to be prepared for examination in the First Year's Course of Studies at the next session.² Having been successful in their examinations, the four Nationals were received into full connection on January 14, 1867.³ At the same Conference Fieldbrave and Zahur-ul-Haqq were elected to Deacons' Orders.⁴ The Conference of 1868 admitted On Trial Sundar Lall, who had been recommended by the Quarterly Conference of Shahjahanpur.⁵ The first Nationals ordained as Elders were Janvier and Zahur-ul-Haqq, in 1870. The Conference of 1870 also considered the question of electing Local Preachers to Deacons' Orders. This action was determined to be necessary because of the insufficient number of ordained members of Conference to perform the rites of baptism and marriage.⁶ Enoch Burge, Ambica Charan Paul, and William Plumer were elected to Deacons' Orders as Local Preachers.

Following the example of the Annual Conferences in America the Indian Mission Conference appointed committees to prepare courses of study for those seeking admission into Conference Membership. The effort was made to adapt the system to the needs and conditions of India. In 1867 the Secretary of the Con-

¹*RMS*, XLVI (1865), 93-95.

²*MIMC*, 1866, p. 9.

³*Ibid.*, 1867, p. 8.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*, 1868, p. 61.

⁶*Ibid.*, 1870, p. 50. The rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church restrict the privilege of administering baptism and performing the marriage ceremony to ordained ministers. The laws of the Government of India also require that the marriage ceremony be performed by a registered ordained minister.

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ference was ordered "to forward for the approval of the Bishops, the Course of Study adopted by the Conference for candidates for admission On Trial into the Conference, and for Orders."¹ The course of studies then adopted was amended from time to time as new situations were encountered, as for example, when the Taylor movement caused a large number of young English and Anglo-Indian men to seek admission into Conference membership, it was voted "that it is the desire of this Conference that English-speaking persons seeking admission to our Conference shall be expected to pass the regular Disciplinary Course of Study and other studies corresponding to the Vernacular Course of Study adopted by the Conference."² The South India Conference ruled that all of the men who entered its ranks must study and be examined upon at least one of the Indian Vernaculars, even though their work was to be largely among English-speaking people.³

5. The District Conference originated in India. Many of the preachers, teachers, and Bible readers were of humble origin and very ordinary ability, and did not seem qualified for membership in the Annual Conference. It became necessary to provide some sort of organization by which their work could be directed, and by which they could be better trained. As early as 1862 a "Mutual Improvement Missionary Association" was formed at Sitapur by J. T. Gracey, and in 1864 E. W. Parker at Moradabad organized such an association for training the helpers and workers. Out of such institutions as these grew the more formal District Meeting, which, later, became the District Conference.

The Conference of 1870 adopted a uniform plan of organization for all districts. The Association in each district was to meet annually; all members of Annual Conference, all Local Preachers and Exhorters were to be members, and all Christian teachers and other workers might become members upon the vote of the Association; the Presiding Elder was to be the President *ex-officio*. The work of the Association was to arrange courses of study and examinations for all workers in the district, and to conduct literary

¹*MIMC.*, 1867, p. 11.

²*Ibid.*, 1875, p. 60.

MSIC, 1879-90, p. 12.

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and religious programs. At the time of the meeting the Presiding Elder fixed the appointment for each worker for the ensuing year.¹ This organization was known as "The District Association for Native Helpers" during the years 1870-71, but in 1872 it was spoken of as "The District Conference."²

The India Conference of 1872 instructed its delegate to the General Conference of that year to endeavor to secure an amendment to the Discipline which would give legal standing to the District Conference in India.³ Accounts of the work of the District Associations had been published in American religious papers, and other memorials were presented to the General Conference requesting the authorization of District Conferences in America. A heated discussion occurred on the Conference floor, and it was only by a vote of 144 to 136 that action legalizing the District Conference was adopted.⁴ The amendment provided for an organization similar in its essential details with the Associations of India. It was directed, however, that the District Conference should meet twice annually. Further, authority was given it to hear complaints against, to license, and to recommend to the Annual Conference, Local Preachers as suitable candidates for Deacons' or Elders' Orders, and for admission On Trial in the Travelling Connection.⁵

Active District Conferences were soon established in each Presiding Elder's district in India, and as time went on the District Conference in India "boldly added to its functions as necessity called for such action," and it has become, in some respects, "a more important body than the Annual Conference."⁶

6. The Central Conference in India was a body unique in Methodism; but by 1888 it had already vindicated its right to exist. The rapid and wide extension of the Methodist Church during the

¹MIAC, 1870, p. 60.

²*Ibid.*, 1872, p. 14.

³*Ibid.*, 1872, p. 41.

⁴JGC, XVII (1876), 410 f.

⁵*The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1872), pp. 60-63. Cited hereafter as *Discipline*.

⁶Thoburn, *India*, p. 541.

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decade 1870-80 produced a conviction in the minds of Methodist missionaries that there was "need for some peculiar central organization, adapted to their exceptional situation, and designed to bind their scattered numbers more closely together, and foster the growth of such institutions as God in his providence might plant among them."¹ Finally a plan was drawn up for what was called a Delegated Conference, and a memorial was sent to the General Conference asking for its formal sanction.

The proposal was a novel one, and, as might have been anticipated, created serious inquiry, if not positive alarm, in the minds of many of our leading men. It looked like a General Conference in embryo.²

In 1879 it was proposed that the North India Conference and the South India Conference should hold their next sessions in adjoining cities, in order to hold a joint session at which could be discussed the practicability of organizing a Delegated Conference which might consider matters of general interests to both Conferences. Accordingly, the North India Conference met in Cawnpore on January 7, 1880, and the South India Conference in Allahabad on January 8. The former adopted the resolution:

Whereas, the internal development and wide extension of our work in India renders it highly desirable that there be a properly constituted ecclesiastical body representing the general interests of the M. E. Church throughout the empire, and

Whereas, the approaching reunion of the two Annual Conferences at Allahabad will afford peculiarly favorable facilities for the organization of such a body, therefore:—

Resolved, That this Conference agree, provided the South India Conference concur—to empower the united body of the two Conferences to organize a representative assembly and provide for its perpetuation, by the election of delegates at stated times from each Conference in India, provided that no action shall be taken which will in any way interfere with the rights or operations of the General Missionary Society, or contravene the organic law of the M. E. Church.³

The South India Conference adopted a similar resolution, with the added proviso, "That no action shall be taken therein

¹Thoburn, *India*, p. 140

²*Ibid.*

³*MNIC*, 1880, p. 60.

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which shall interfere with the accepted policy of this Conference in reference to its principle of self-support."¹ The joint session of the two Conferences was held in Allahabad January 13-14, 1880, and provided for the calling of the first Delegated Conference to convene in Allahabad in July of the following year.

The first Delegated Conference was composed of seven clerical and three lay representatives from the North India Conference, and six clerical and two lay representatives from the South India Conference. Only two members of the body, Isaac Fieldbrave, a minister, and Ram Chandra Bose, a layman, both from North India, were Nationals.² A Constitution was adopted, in which the body was designated "The Delegated Conference of the M. E. Church in India." The object of the Conference was stated in terms similar to those used in the resolution of the North India Conference quoted above. An Executive Committee was provided for, which was to have responsibility for the interim business of the Conference.³ The Conference also adopted a memorial to the Viceroy of India concerning the laws dealing with Marriage and Divorce, established a General Board of Publication and Management, approved the *Lucknow Witness* as the official organ of the Church, created a General Board of Education, adopted a memorial to General Conference asking for more frequent episcopal visitation, expressed its opinion on the status of women missionaries, and drew up a form of procedure for acquiring and holding Church property.⁴ The North India Conference in 1882 gave its approval to the action of the Delegated Conference, with the amendment, however, that the name of the body should be "The Central Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India."⁵ The South India Conference gave its approval to the Constitution and other measures without suggesting any amendments.⁶

¹*MSIC*, 1879-80, p. 7.

²*Minutes of the Delegated Conference of the M. E. Church in India* (Lucknow: M. E. Press, 1881), p. 1.

³*Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*MNIC*, 1882, pp. 66, 117-24.

⁶*MSIC*, 1881, p. 10.

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Although the General Conference of 1880 failed to grant the request of the India Conferences for the organization of a Delegated Conference, the General Conference of 1884 acted favorably on the memorials submitted by the two Conferences and enacted legislation which permitted the organization of Central Mission Conferences "when in any of our Foreign Mission fields there is more than one Annual Conference or Mission, or more than one form of Methodism." The description of the membership and powers of the Central Mission Conference was in terms similar to those used in the Constitution adopted by the Delegated Conference in 1881. It was provided, however, that the Conference should have no authority to involve the Missionary Society in any financial responsibility, nor to hold or control the property of the Society without the official permission of the Society.¹

After the meeting in 1881 there were no further sessions of the "Delegated Conference," but in accordance with the action of the General Conference the "First Central Conference" met in Bareilly in 1885 under the presidency of Bishop Hurst. Fifty-one members were present. The reports of the various Boards and Committees were heard, and the numerous editors, committees, and Conference officers were elected.² The second session of the Central Conference was held in Bombay in 1887, with Bishop Ninde presiding. It was recommended that the Singapore work be constituted a separate mission, to be administered by the Missionary Society. Proposals for readjusting the Conference boundaries and setting up a new Conference to be called the "Bengal Conference," were adopted, and a memorial was sent to the General Conference asking that an Episcopal residence be established in India.³

3. Episcopal Supervision

1. No problem of administration in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India seems to have caused more discussion in India and America than that of Episcopal Supervision. Since the denomina-

¹*JGC*, XIX (1884), 285, 349; *Discipline*, 1884, pp. 163-65.

²Reid and Gracey, *op. cit.*, III, 168.

³*Ibid.*, p. 169.

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tion was Episcopal it was considered that the oversight of a foreign mission should have an Episcopal character. At a meeting of the Board of Bishops in 1855 it was unanimously judged best to distribute the supervision of the missions among the bishops severally; committing each mission or class of missions to one bishop,

that he might give his whole attention.....to the particular missionary interest committed to him..... In this way he will become more intimately acquainted with it, and can enter more feelingly into its conditions and wants.¹

Under this arrangement India and Turkey were assigned to Bishop Simpson, though no mission work had yet been undertaken in those countries. It was planned that each bishop would make a brief visit once during each quadrennium to the field under his supervision. But this proved to be unfair to the work in America, and inadequate to the needs in the mission field. By many it was thought that "rather than to take a man well fitted for the episcopacy in the United States and send him to a foreign country, where he would have almost everything to learn, and then hurry him back, it would be better to take a missionary, who already had the knowledge and experience, and make him a missionary bishop for his own field."² As a consequence, the General Conference of 1856 proposed an amendment to the Third Restrictive Rule which would give the General Conference the power to "appoint a missionary bishop or superintendent for any of our foreign missions, limiting his episcopal jurisdiction to the same respectively."³ This amendment was concurred in by the affirmative vote of the Annual Conferences, and became a part of the Church's Constitution. Under this authorization Francis Burns, a Negro, was consecrated missionary bishop for Liberia in 1858, and after his death J. W. Roberts, also a Negro, was consecrated

¹*RMS*, XXXVI (1855), 128.

²Bishop T. B. Neely, *The Methodist Episcopal Church and Its Foreign Missions* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), p. 119. This is a very valuable treatment of the legal aspects of the relation of the episcopacy and of the American Church to its foreign missions.

³*JGC*, XII (1856), 144-46.

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for Liberia. When in 1884 certain educated Negro ministers declined to accept the responsibility of taking up the duties of the missionary bishopric, William Taylor was elected "Missionary Bishop of Africa."¹

But in India the plan of Episcopal supervision adopted by the Board of Bishops in 1855 prevailed until 1888. By the end of this period, however, there was a strong conviction that this method was inadequate. During the Superintendency of William Butler no bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church visited India in an official capacity, though Bishops Janes and Simpson had Episcopal supervision of the work. In 1864 the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society expressed the opinion that the General Conference should make provision for one of the bishops to visit each field at least once in every four years.² Bishop Thompson came to India in 1864 to organize the India Mission Conference and to inspect the work. During the period 1864-1888 the following Bishops visited India in official capacity: 1864, Edward Thompson; 1870, Hiram Kingsley; 1874, William H. Harris; 1876, E. G. Andrews; 1878, Thomas Bowman; 1880, S. M. Merrill; 1882, Randolph Foster; 1884, J. M. Hurst; 1887, W. X. Ninde.³

2. Before the General Conference of 1868 there were proposals to elect a missionary bishop for India. But the India Conference adopted a resolution strongly opposing the plan on the grounds that it would separate the Indian Church from vital contact with the Mother Church. No resident bishop for India should be elected for at least four years, but one of the bishops should be sent from America to hold the Conference and inspect the work.⁴ This resolution was presented to the General Conference, and the Committee on Episcopacy of that body recommended that no missionary bishops be elected that year. The Committee on Missions, however, secured the adoption of a resolution requesting the Board of Bishops to arrange for one of their number to "care-

¹Neely, *op. cit.*, pp. 124 f.

²MMS, VI (1864), 490.

³Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

⁴MIAC, 1868, p. 59.

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fully and patiently review" each of the mission fields during the next quadrennium.¹

The sentiment in America was growing that the supervision of the Missions of the Church demanded too much of the time and energy of the bishops, and was unfair to the American church. The strain of visiting the foreign fields had already cost the life of one bishop, for Bishop Kingsley had died on his way home from India in 1870. Again the India Conference petitioned the General Conference to leave the plan of supervision unchanged, and expressed the hope that the bishop placed in charge of India might "reside in America so as to be able promptly to send us re-inforcements, and represent our interests to the Board."² Again the General Conference took no action other than to request the Bishops to arrange for Episcopal visitation during the ensuing four years.³

It was becoming obvious, however, that more careful Episcopal supervision was needed for work so extensive as that in India had now become. The North India Conference in 1879 requested that a bishop be sent to India every alternate year,⁴ and two years later the same Conference invited Bishop Merrill to remain in India during the coming year and in case that should be impossible, to urge upon the Board of Bishops that the bishop who should visit the work remain in India sixteen months.⁵ The Delegated Conference which met during that same year addressed a memorial to the Board of Bishops pointing out the urgency of the need for more constant and direct supervision of a work so diversified and extended as that in India, and requested that a bishop be sent "to remain two years or at least through two cold seasons in India, during every four years, until such time as they may deem it expedient to advise the residence of one of their number in this Empire."⁶

¹*JGC*, XV (1868), 74, 221, 326.

²*MIAC*, 1872, p. 38.

³*JGC*, XVI (1872), 448.

⁴*MNIC*, 1879, p. 43.

⁵*Ibid.*, 1881, p. 66.

⁶*Minutes of Delgated Conference*, 1881, p. 10.

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We have seen how the rapid territorial expansion under the influence of Taylor and Thoburn forced the Methodist Episcopal Church in India to adapt its policies of missionary method and its ecclesiastical organization to changing conditions. The same proved true in the matter of Episcopal supervision. The American missionaries had attempted to preserve the contact with the Home Church which was furnished by the periodic visits of bishops from America. But the history of the Methodist Church in India has been a record of gradual separation between the younger and older Churches. Thus a resident bishop was now desired, but the feeling was general that he should not be a bishop of limited powers, such as had been granted to Africa, but should be one of the General Superintendents.¹ The task in India had become so large, however, that the missionaries seemed almost overwhelmed, and there is a note almost of desperation in their communications which relate to Episcopal supervision. Such was the case in the resolution adopted by the South India Conference in 1887, in which they "earnestly memorialize the approaching General Conference to so plan and arrange the work of Episcopal supervision throughout the entire Church that a Bishop may come to India as a General Superintendent residing in India."² Likewise, early in 1888, the North India Conference sent an urgent memorial to the General Conference to fix an Episcopal residence for a General Superintendent in India.³ But the requests of the India Conferences were not to be fulfilled in the form in which they had hoped, for the Committee on Missions reported to the General Conference:

The Committee on Missions, to whom was referred the memorial of the Central Conference of India concerning Episcopal supervision, having maturely considered the same, and

¹That the sentiment in America was strongly opposed to appointing one of the General Superintendents (i. e. a bishop whose Episcopal jurisdiction was not limited to any particular territory, but who might travel among the people in any part of the United States) will be evident from the discussion of the subject by Bishop Neely, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-164. When Taylor was elected bishop in 1884 it was as Missionary Bishop.

²*MSIC*, 1887, p. 47.

³Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

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having heard the representations of the delegates from the Conferences in India, respectfully recommend: That a Missionary Bishop be elected and consecrated for India and Malaysia.¹

This recommendation was adopted, and James M. Thoburn was elected Missionary Bishop for India and Malaysia.² This incident proved to be so significant for the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India that it may well mark the close of one period and the opening of another in the records of the Church. That the action of the General Conference in electing Dr. Thoburn Missionary Bishop met with the approval of the Indian Church may be inferred from a resolution adopted by the South India Conference:

Resolved, That the action of the General Conference in giving us a Missionary Bishop with full Episcopal power, co-ordinate in authority with the General Superintendents and drawing his support from the Episcopal Fund is in perfect accord with our wishes.³

4. Administration of Finances

The record of the financial interests of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India may be considered in two parts: the distribution of the funds secured in the United States and forwarded to India by the Missionary Society, and the distribution of the funds secured in India. The latter is generally discussed under the title "Self-support."

1. The organization of the India Mission Conference produced a number of problems in the realm of financial administration. During the Superintendency of William Butler the administration of finances was relatively simple. A study of the Minutes of the Missionary Society indicates that the initiative in such matters usually rested with the Society. At its Annual Meetings in 1852, 1853, 1854, and 1855 the General Committee made appropriations for opening work in India.⁴ At its various

¹*JGC*, XX (1888), 438.

²*Ibid.*, p. 332.

³*MSIC*, 1888, p. 53.

⁴*MMS*, V. 300, 350, 416; VI, 8.

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meetings in 1856 the Board of Managers of the Society made appropriations for various aspects of the work in India.¹ Even in 1857, when Butler had assumed charge of the Mission, the instructions about the cost and number of buildings to be secured were very specific.² By the end of that year, however, Dr. Butler had begun to submit estimates as to the financial needs of the work, and these formed the basis of the appropriations made by the Board of Managers.³ From this time till the close of his Superintendency Butler acted as the Agent of the Missionary Society. While his estimates were valued, the final determination as to the distribution of the funds rested with the Society. It is only natural that some of the missionaries chafed under this highly centralized form of administration. The Annual Meeting had very little real authority.⁴

The organization of the India Mission Conference in 1864 tended to spread the responsibility of making decisions relating to financial matters. "For a few years it was felt by most of those in authority in America that the operations of the Missionary Society were somewhat hampered by the creation of ecclesiastical bodies, empowered with all the functions of Annual Conferences, in the various fields."⁵ The situation was, and still is, somewhat anomalous. In Methodist Episcopal polity the Annual Conference is a self-directing body, being subject only to a few restrictions of the Constitution and the General Conference. Yet the Conferences on the mission fields found, and still find, that in the very important matter of their financial policy they must consult another organization of the Church. As long as some of

¹*MMS*, VI, 54 f. for outfit allowance; p. 104, for salary and expenses incident with opening the Mission; p. 111, for missionary dwelling.

²*Ibid.*, p. 126.

³In October Butler wrote requesting \$1,000 for opening an orphanage (*Ibid.*, p. 196); it is interesting to note, however, that when Butler requested funds for opening educational work the Board of Managers demanded that a vote of the Mission be taken on the matter (*Ibid.*, p. 197). The appropriations made by the Board for 1858, 1859, etc. were based on the estimates submitted by Butler (*Ibid.*, pp. 221, 275, etc.).

⁴On at least one occasion the Missionary Society reminded the Annual Meeting that the Superintendent had veto power (*Ibid.*, p. 445).

⁵Thoburn, *India*, p. 276.

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the funds distributed on the mission field are secured in the United States by the Missionary Society, this condition will probably continue. Certainly no perfect co-ordination of the functions of the Missionary Society and of the Conferences in India has yet been achieved.

Previous to the organization of the India Mission Conference Bishop Thompson asked the Missionary Society to give instructions relative to the administration of the finances of the Mission in India. The Finance Committee of the Board of Managers submitted a report which became the standard policy of the Missionary Society for several years. It included thirteen items, only a few of which particularly concern the present study. Item IV instructed that the expenses of all local material interests, such as buildings and repairs, should be paid from funds secured on the field as far as possible; VI authorized the election of a Treasurer by the Conference, subject to the approval of the Bishop presiding; VII and VIII provide that the funds from America will be received by the Treasurer, and remitted to the Presiding Elders, who will see that the money is paid to the parties and applied to the objects to which it is specifically appropriated. Thus originates the system, making the Presiding Elders paymasters, which has so often been the cause of misunderstanding and bitterness between the missionary and his Indian colleagues. Item X authorizes a Committee of Estimates which shall report the estimates for the ensuing year. They shall have due regard for the local revenue which may be expected. Their estimates shall be revised by the Conference, and with the concurrence of the Bishop, shall be forwarded to the Missionary Society for approval and disposition.¹

2. After its organization the India Mission Conference in 1864 elected D. W. Thomas Treasurer, and agreed that the three men elected as the Committee on Estimates, later called the Committee on Missions, should also act as Presiding Elders. J. W. Waugh, C. W. Judd, and E. D. Parker were elected by ballot.²

¹MMS, VI, 509-12.

²Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 f.

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This plan of financial administration was continued till 1877, when, with the authorization of the General Conference, a Finance Committee was organized. At each session of the Mission Conference the Committee on Missions presented its estimates for the ensuing year. After revision and approval by the Conference, these were forwarded to the Missionary Society. Thus, the Conference as a whole voted on the disposition of the funds entrusted to it. But in 1876 the following significant resolution was adopted:

Whereas, It has been found in the practical work of our Conference that the business growing out of our relation to the Missionary Society imposes upon us such a vast amount of work not suitable for an Annual Conference, and,

Whereas, It is highly desirable to reduce the amount of secular work to be transacted at our annual sessions, and thus confine the Conference in a large measure to its proper ecclesiastical functions, and,

Whereas, We believe it would remove from many minds a serious objection to a more general introduction of Native preachers to Conference membership in all our mission fields—

Therefore, Resolved, that we respectfully request the approaching General Conference to amend the Discipline by inserting the word *Domestic* before the word Missions, in para. 380, and by adding a provision for the appointment of a Committee in each foreign mission in which a Conference exists, to which shall be entrusted all matters pertaining to the distribution of the appropriations of the Missionary Society.

2. Resolved, That we respectfully suggest that such Committee should consist of the President and Treasurer of the Conference, the Presiding Elders of the Districts receiving Missionary appropriations, and two other persons, ministers or laymen, nominated by the President of the Conference and approved by the Board.¹

James M. Thoburn presented this petition to the General Conference in 1876,² and favorable action was taken by that body. It was provided, however, that in addition to the members *ex officio*, five additional members of the Conference should be elected by the Conference.³ The India Conference elected its

¹MIAC, 1876, p. 67.

²JGC, XVII (1876), 106.

³MNIC, 1877, p. 37.

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first Finance Committee in 1877. This Committee, when approved by the Board of Managers, was authorized to distribute the funds of the Missionary Society.

The North India Conference in 1878 constituted its Finance Committee "the Conference Board of Trustees" and, as such, gave it charge of all deeds of Mission property, and authorized it to hold, invest and control the income of all endowments connected with the Conference except those belonging to institutions having separate Boards of Trustees.¹

As interesting development in the construction of the Finance Committee is indicated by an action taken by the Missionary Society in 1878, and another in 1882. In the former year the North India Conference asked for a modification of the manner of constituting the Committee so as to confine it membership to missionaries sent from America. The Board of Managers declined to authorize such a change.² There is no indication in the Minutes of the North India Conference that any other than missionaries had ever been nominated to the Finance Committee. But in 1882 the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society adopted the following:

The Finance Committee of the North India Conference shall hereafter consist of the President of the Conference, the Treasurer of the Mission and the Presiding Elders of the Districts, with five others to be named by the Conference and approved by this Board. At least three of this Committee shall be native Indian brethren.³

No material change in the organization of the Finance Committee as thus constituted occurred till after 1888.

It is not within the province of this study to enter into the details of the transactions of the Finance Committees with the Missionary Society. The Minutes of the North India Conference and of the Society record correspondence dealing with salaries of missionaries and Nationals, furlough and furlough travel, maintenance of a sanitarium, the buying and selling of property, pensions,

¹*Ibid.*, 1878, p. 51.

²*MMS*, VII (1878), 586.

³*Ibid.*, VII (September 19, 1882).

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support of a Christian village, debts and liquidation of debts, and similar subjects. In addition, there are the transactions recorded in the Minutes of the Finance Committees. The financial administration of the educational institutions of the M. E. Church in India furnishes another large item in the records. All of these matters might well supply sufficient material for an independent study.

5. Self-Support

1. The question of Self-support has come of late to assume a place of extreme importance in Missionary Administration. There is evidence that the Methodist Episcopal Church in India has had the matter under consideration from almost its earliest period. Dr. Bulter's reports to the Missionary Society generally closed with a statement concerning the amount of money secured in India. In his final report he stated that \$55,186 had been given during his Superintendency. The amount collected for Missions in India in 1865 was 42,688 rupees, and in 1866, 39,160 rupees.¹ In 1874 the church in Naini Tal was declared capable of paying its pastor's salary.² As time went on the congregations in Lucknow, Cawnpore and other larger cities were able to do the same. In 1875 the Committee on the State of the Church reported that "in many places the native churches are supporting their own pastors."³ But these achievements in "self-support" are more apparent than real. Figures are not available on which to base exact statements, but it is clear that a considerable part of the money which Dr. Butler secured in India was given by influential British officials, many of whom were not members of the Methodist Church. The figures for 1865 and 1866 include the grant-in-aid which the Government supplied for the educational work. There is no way of determining just what proportion of the funds contributed to the pastors' salaries in the so-called "self-supporting churches" was given by those in the employ of the Church whose salaries were paid from American funds.

¹*MIMC*, 1866, p. 30.

²*Ibid.*, 1874, p. 6.

³*Ibid.*, 1875, p. 70.

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When tested on the basis of funds secured from members of the Methodist Church whose support was independent of mission appropriations, the amount of self-support developed before 1888 in the North India Conference would seem to have been relatively small. This fact is not very surprising when it is remembered that the majority of the membership belonged to the poverty-stricken strata of Indian society.

2. The story of the early efforts at self-support in the South India Conference is inseparably connected with the name of William Taylor. As he launched out upon his program of evangelism among the Europeans and Anglo-Indians in the larger cities of India Taylor developed that which he called the "Pauline Method" of support. Counting on the fact that in nearly every large town and city there were colonies of English-speaking people, he determined to form "fellowship bands," which, if requested, might be organized into churches. These would voluntarily undertake the support of their own pastors, and would become centers for the evangelization of other English-speaking people, and eventually, of the masses of India. When the fellowship bands in Bombay petitioned Taylor to organize a Methodist Episcopal Church in their city,¹ he replied through the pages of the *Bombay Guardian*, stating the basis on which a church might be organized, adding, "All of us further agree, that ours is to be an Evangelistic, self-supporting Church."² It was proposed that the churches would neither ask nor accept any funds from the Missionary Society, beyond the passage of missionaries to India. The ministers would have no stated salary, but would live on a subsistence allowance as near the level of the natives as health and efficiency allowed. An adequate development of Indian resources would make it unnecessary to depend on the Missionary Society. Appropriations in advance might hinder a healthy development of the churches.³ New churches were organized so rapidly, however, that it was found difficult to supply them with suitable pastors raised up in India; hence it was deemed legitimate

¹Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

²*Ibid.*, p. 153.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 154-57.

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to call missionaries from America, whose transit, in most cases, would be paid by the Missionary Society, but whose salaries were to be paid in India by the churches to which they ministered.

The missionaries and ministers who joined Taylor caught his spirit and became ardent advocates of his plan of self-support. The Pastoral Address presented to the Methodists of South India by the first session of the South India Conference re-affirmed and emphasized the policy.¹ A Special Committee on Native Work reported to the Conference in 1878: "After several years' trial we find no reason for changing this policy; but on the other hand deem it proper to re-affirm our position, and more accurately define our policy for the future."² Even Nationals who go out as missionaries among non-Christians are to be supported by those among whom they minister.

But the plan was fraught with difficulties, and there were those who began to wonder whether more effective and far-reaching work might not be accomplished if some of the missionary activities conducted in the vernacular were subsidized by the Missionary Society. Fearing that this point of view might gain ground, the Bombay Quarterly Conference presented a resolution to the South India Conference of 1882 strongly protesting against the proposal to vote for appropriations from the Missionary Society towards purely Native work.³ But the lines drawing the South India Conference into a relationship with the Missionary Society were becoming more numerous. Dr. Reid, the Corresponding Secretary of the Society, was in attendance at the Conference session of 1882, and that body "approved of the policy of having the Missionary Secretaries visit the Foreign Missions of the Church, and extended a cordial invitation to such secretaries as may be sent to India to come to our field and thoroughly inspect

¹*MSIC*, 1876, p. 17: "In pursuing this course we have been influenced, partly by the necessities of the case, partly by the exceptional circumstances around us, partly by the conviction that the early fathers of Methodism, not to say of the New Testament, had set us a precedent, and partly by the hope of extending this work in all its simplicity and efficiency."

²*Ibid.*, 1878, p. 15.

³*Ibid.*, 1882, pp. 28-30.

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our work.”¹ At its session the following year the Conference elected J. M. Thoburn Corresponding Secretary to conduct all correspondence with the authorities in America.²

The controversy over the Taylor method waxed warm in India and in the United States. The sentiment was growing in South India that the Church should give larger attention to evangelistic efforts among non-Europeans while the conviction was impressing itself more strongly upon the leaders that this work could not be carried on without funds from America. The 1885 session of the Conference was stormy. The result was that the Missionary Society was requested to make an appropriation for “purely native work,” that is, for work carried on in the vernaculars by men not engaged in English-speaking work. It was proposed that for every dollar given by the Society a dollar would be raised in the South India Conference. For this purpose the Society appropriated \$10,000.³ The Conference decided, in 1886, that, in order to preserve its principle of Self-support, the appropriation should be used for three purposes only: first, work in new and distant fields; second, support of missionaries engaged in purely evangelistic work; and third, support of new missionaries during their first year.⁴ The Missionary Society, in 1886, repeated the appropriation of \$10,000 on the grant-in-aid basis, and, in addition, appropriated \$6,000 for purely native work in places remote from English-speaking communities who might take part in evangelistic work. Fifteen thousand dollars were also granted for outgoing and returning missionaries.⁵ In 1887 the South India Conference appointed a Finance Committee,⁶ and, technically speaking, the South India work now became uniform with that in North India in the matter of the administration of finances. A request to the Missionary Society could now be prefaced with the statement that “the stream of benevolence by means of which

¹*MSIC*, 1882, p. 12.

²*Ibid.*, 1883, p. 11.

³*RMS*, 1885, p. 185.

⁴Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁵*RMS*, 1886, pp. 192 f.

⁶*MSIC*, 1886-87, p. 7.

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we are to irrigate this moral desert is both inadequate and unsteady."¹ As the founder of the South India Mission had feared, the appropriations from America strongly influenced the further development of the Church. The Committee on the State of the Church reported to the Conference of 1888:

It was a sad day when our English and Native work became so divorced from each other that there is now danger of our attention being entirely absorbed by the latter to the prejudice of the former. This can be avoided only by pastors and people of each department being kept in touch and sympathy with the work of the other.²

An interesting experiment in Self-support had been attempted on a large scale, and was not found entirely practicable. Several factors in the situation militated against its success. Bishop Oldham stated the matter thus:

Two factors that are now clear to us were not at that time understood by Mr. Taylor. The membership of these English Churches changes constantly....., and the great bulk of the resident English have but small knowledge of the vernaculars. Besides it takes more than the spare time and the zeal of untrained laymen to make any permanent impression.....³

The year 1888 may be looked upon as having closed one period and opened another in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. By this date the rapid territorial expansion which had characterized the work of the Church for fifteen years had practically ceased. The first session of the Bengal Conference convened in January of this year. The Central Conference, authorized by the General Conference of 1884, was given new powers by that of 1888. This year marked the election of James M. Thoburn as Missionary Bishop for India and Malaysia, an epoch-making event in itself. The Finance Committee had now assumed a place of great importance in Church administration. The Taylor method of Self-support had been given trial

¹*MSIC*, p. 54.

²*Ibid.*, 1888, p. 42.

³Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

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in a large section of the Church and had been found inadequate. In 1885, 560 persons in one neighbourhood had received baptism within one week, and mass-conversions were now imminent in several sections of the Church, and the year 1888 may be looked upon as the date of the beginning of the remarkable mass-movements which were to characterize the third period of Methodism in India.

CHAPTER III

The Mass Movement and its Consequences 1888-1906

THE third period of Episcopal Methodism in India was marked by large accessions through mass conversions. At the close of 1887 the Christian community¹ of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India was estimated at 11,000, while in 1906 it was more than 175,000.² The great majority of the new members represented by these figures entered the Church as "Mass Movement Christians."³ Dr. John R. Mott estimates that one half of the Roman Catholics in India are descendants of mass movement converts, and that probably not less than 80 per cent of the Protestants are the product of mass movements.⁴ This latter figure is certainly not too high for the membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.

¹The "Christian Community" is determined by taking the total of the number of "Full Members," "Baptized Probationers," and "Baptized Children." "Probationers" are those who, though baptized Christians, are not yet qualified for full membership in the Church.

²*Report of the Mission Work of the M. E. Church in India and Burma* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1893), p. 3; F. B. Price, *India Mission Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia* (Calcutta: Methodist Publishing House, 1907), p. 265. These, and other statistics in this chapter, are only approximate. Our study is concerned only with the M. E. Church in India, while the figures given in the various Reports, Minutes, and Statistical Tables often include data for Burma and Malaysia as well. The growth in membership in these areas was comparatively very much smaller than in India during this period, but an effort will be made to deduct from the totals cited for Southern Asia the figures which refer to Burma and Malaysia so that the result will be approximately correct for India.

³Dr. J. Waskom Pickett, a recent student of the Christian Mass Movement in India, would prefer to call this phenomenon a "group movement" rather than a "mass movement," for it is characterized by a group decision to accept Christian baptism rather than the disorganized action of a mass of people moving forward, as might be the case in some "revival meeting." It is further to be noted that after baptism there is a preservation of the converts' social integration (*Christian Mass Movements in India* [New York: Abingdon Press, 1933], p. 22).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 5.

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1. History of Mass Movements in India Methodism

1. The entrance of the Methodist Episcopal Church into Mass Movement activity was unintentional, and formed no part of the original policy. Very soon after work was opened at Moradabad in the United Provinces in 1858, five men from the caste known as *Mazabhi Sikhs* came to the missionaries and asked for Christian instruction. Some members of this caste had heard a group of preachers of the American Presbyterian Mission at a *mela*, or religious fair, on the banks of the Ganges. In a general meeting of the caste these representatives were sent to Moradabad to inform the missionaries that the whole group was ready to accept Christianity. These people lived in villages about twenty miles from Moradabad, and constituted a community of four or five thousand. Convinced of the sincerity and earnestness of the five men the missionary baptized them, and went with them to investigate the situation in their villages. Schools were opened in a number of the villages by teachers who were at the same time pastors for the inquirers. After some months the first converts were baptized, and a trained Indian preacher was appointed to live in one of the villages and direct the entire work. The more intelligent boys of the community were selected and given the opportunities of advanced education in the central station. From this group came the teachers and preachers who were sent back among their people. By 1881 practically all of the *Mazabhi Sikhs* had become Christian.¹

In the early days of the mission an Indian Christian, who had formerly been a *fakir* among the *Chamars*, or leather-workers, came to the Methodist missionaries. He had been baptized in the Church Missionary Society Mission. Since, however, most of his disciples lived in the territory of the Methodist Church he requested that the latter set him apart for work among his old disciples. He was soon put to work as an evangelist among the *Chamars*, but undertook the education of a few boys in addition.

¹*Ibid.*, p. 51; E. W. Parker, "The Depressed Classes," *Report of the Third Decennial Missionary Conference held at Bombay*, ed. A. Manwaring (Bombay: Education Society's Steam Press, 1893), p. 28.

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These became teachers and opened small schools in a number of the villages. About fifty *Chamar* boys were brought into Moradabad, where a special school for these Depressed Class boys was opened. Eventually these, and many others, became Christians and some of them returned to work among their own people as teachers and ministers.¹ As a result of this work a considerable number of *Chamars* were baptized and gathered into churches.

The work among the *Mehtas*, or Sweepers, also began early. In 1859 some young men of this caste were converted in the Budaun District. Two of these became preachers. During the succeeding years a few individuals, or occasionally a family, from this caste became Christian. In 1880 a group of Sweepers were baptized at Aonla, in the Budaun District. Between 1880 and 1885 Dr. Hoskins baptized over 450 Sweepers. By this time something akin to a mass movement had set in.²

In 1885 a bit of excitement was created not only in the Methodist Church, but in other Churches of North India, as the pages of the *Indian Witness* bear testimony, by the report that in the Gonda District 560 persons in one neighbourhood had received baptism within one week. The *Report of the Missionary Society* for 1886 comments, "There has been no such work as this in the history of the mission; this however, is but the beginning of what we may expect."³ The Reverend Samuel Knowles, in reporting the incident to the Society, wrote:

When we arrived at Chandunpur we began our work among the wild and simple sons of the forest. In a week's labour among them God gave us seven villages in which we baptized 560 men, women, and children.⁴

¹Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

²Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

³RMS, 1886, p. 160.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 173. The history of Knowles' work among the *Tharus* is recorded in his *The Gospel in Gonda* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1889), pp. 209-46. This work was perhaps the most superficial of all the mass movement activity of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Groups were baptized after instruction which lasted only a few days. Due to the unhealthy territory in which the *Tharus* lived, no adequate follow up work could be undertaken. It is not surprising, therefore, that the *Tharu* converts turned *en masse* from Christianity at a later period, and went over into Mohammedanism, or returned to their primitive animism. See Pickett, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

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This was the beginning of the work among the *Tharus*.

One other instance of group baptism should be noted. The Report for the Shahjahanpur Station for 1867 mentions the conversion of Ujayar Lal, a landholder, by caste a *Thakur*, who brought others with him. Fifty-six adults and thirty-one children were baptized in this district, nineteen in one village, thirty-three in another, and thirty-five in a third. These villages were fairly close to each other. Baptism was delayed in this case until the Presiding Elder was convinced that the people were properly prepared.¹

2. Thus, before 1888 Methodist missionaries had already baptized groups among the *Chamars*, *Mehtas*, *Tharus*, and *Thakurs*. Relatives of these converts now began to hear of these movements toward Christianity and themselves became inquirers. Christians from the Rohilkhand side of the Ganges went across the river into the Muttra, Kasganj, Aligarh, and Meerut districts and settled down. In 1888 the mass movement work of the Methodist Church spread across the Ganges and up and down the region between the Ganges and Jumna rivers, called the Doab, from Cawnpore to Meerut. In order to follow up members of the Church who had moved into the new territory, and to baptize new inquirers, it was decided to send ministers across the Ganges.² In 1887 Hassan Raza Khan was appointed to work in Kasganj. Provided with the assistance of local preachers and teachers he soon opened work in the neighbouring towns. The work spread so rapidly that in 1897 the territory was organized into a District, and Khan was made the Presiding Elder—the first Indian Presiding Elder outside the North India Conference.³ In 1888 the Amroha District of the North India Conference under Zahur-ul-Haqq, extended its lines across the Ganges and work was opened in the Meerut Civil District. In 1889 Rockwell Clancy was appointed to open work in Agra and J. E. Scott to supervise the

¹MIMC, 1868, pp. 10, 11.

²Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-30.

³P. M. Buck, "Story of the Northwest India Conference," *India Mission Jubilee of the M. E. Church in Southern Asia*. Ed.

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work in Muttra.¹ In 1890 the North India Conference requested Bishop Thoburn to set aside one missionary as a Special Evangelist to give his full time to evangelistic efforts in the Conference. E. W. Parker was thus appointed.² The result of this action was a large accession during the following years.

The rapid growth in the size of the Christian community as a result of the Mass Movement was viewed with great concern by many leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A study of the reports of the Committee on the State of the Church of the various sessions of the North India Conference bears interesting testimony to this fact. The Report of 1890 calls attention to the fact that:

The large number of persons who have lately been brought from idolatry, vice and ignorance, make it very perplexing to know how to provide them with proper teaching and pastoral oversight, and it is evident that there are multitudes who are ready for baptism, but are still unbaptized because we have not pastors and teachers to take care of them. These accessions are chiefly from among the village people: they are poor and uneducated; their poverty makes it impossible for them to support the ministers and teachers they need, and their ignorance makes it impossible for them to struggle into a higher life without outside help. How can we give them the help they need? There is no problem in our work which presses upon us as this one does.³

The Committee of 1892 noted the large number of accessions during the year just closing, and added:

But while these things gladden our hearts, we would call attention to the exceeding gravity of our position as a Church in view of the thousands of accessions of the past year. While your Committee reaffirms its conviction that God is leading in this forward movement among the masses, they desire that all shall be fully alive to the tremendous responsibilities which these successes impose upon us. The total baptisms for the year equals our entire enrolled membership one year ago, therefore it becomes us to rejoice with trembling. Our duty to these fast-mustering thousands has only begun when they are baptized.⁴

¹*India Mission Jubilee*, p. 196.

²*MNIC*, 1890, pp. 68, 74.

³*Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1892, pp. 56 f.

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The Committee noted in 1895 a "disposition on the part of preachers to grow more conservative as to those who are fit subjects for baptism, and what qualities and attainments should be required."¹ And the Committee in 1899 answered the question, "Is the Church freeing herself from paganism?" with the confession that reports indicate idolatry in some places, feasts for the dead, and pagan marriage customs in others. Much concern was felt because of these facts.²

From time to time the Committee on the State of the Church made very practical suggestions as to how the Church should attempt to meet her responsibility for those baptized. In 1892 it was urged that baptism should be refused to those inquirers who could not be put under immediate spiritual instruction. Suggestions were then given in detail for the selection, training, and employment of pastors and teachers who were to work among new converts.³ Again, in 1893, instructions were given concerning revival meetings, religious fairs, worship services, Christian rites, and the importance of self-support.⁴

These counsels of caution were well advised, for there were among the leaders of the Church those who became almost intoxicated with the success and magnitude of the movement and led the Church perilously close to disaster. J. M. Thoburn had been an advocate of expansion before his election as Missionary Bishop in 1888, but the new opportunities of leadership afforded him by his elevation to that office made him a most influential leader in the mass movement work. His striking addresses both in India and in America stirred his hearers to renewed energy in prosecuting the work among the Depressed Classes. Bishop E. W. Parker, Bishop F. W. Warne, and many others, were no less enthusiastic in carrying forward this work.⁵

¹*MNIC*, 1895, p. 27.

²*Ibid.*, 1899, p. 29.

³*Ibid.*, 1892, pp. 57 f.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1893, p. 26.

⁵A mass of literature gives evidence to the activities of these early leaders of the Mass Movement work in the M. E. Church in India. See the addresses of Bishop Thoburn to the General Conference of 1892, 1896, and 1900; his addresses to the Central Conferences of Southern Asia from 1889 till 1900; his

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3. Statistics are generally uninteresting, but in this case they may serve to indicate the rapidity of the growth in membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India as a result of the Mass Movements. The figures in the first column represent the situation at the close of 1887, the second column at the close of 1895, the third on October 31, 1906.¹

	1887	1895	1906
Full members and probationers	7,944	69,802	132,566
Christian community ...	11,000	97,610	190,240
Baptisms during the year ...	1,959	15,459	18,996
Indian ministers and other workers ...	168	1,237	2,112
Christian teachers ...	308	1,241	2,724
Christian scholars ...	3,354	15,823	41,759
Sunday School scholars ...	26,585	76,995	149,279

This large increase in membership was greater in North India than in other portions of the country, though from 1895 there were large accessions to the Church in the Baroda District of the Bombay Conference.²

India and Malaysia, chap. xiii: and his various volumes of *Missionary Addresses*: among Bishop Warne's works are: *India's Mass Movement* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1915). and *A Challenge—Shall We Meet It?* (New York: Board of Foreign Missions.) Bishop Parker's activities are reflected in his Presiding Elder's reports to the North India Conference and to the Missionary Society from 1888 till 1900.

¹*Minutes of the Central Conference of the M. E. Church in Southern Asia* (Lucknow, 1896), p. 67 (cited hereafter as MCC); *India Mission Jubilee*, pp. 265 f. These statistics are for India, Burma and Malaysia.

²The baptisms recorded in the North India Conference each year from 1886 through 1893 respectively were: 1,772; 1,432; 1,952; 3,791; 6,098; 14,749; 8,660; 8,079. The large increase in the number of baptisms after the year 1891; is explained by the fact that in 1890 Bishop Thoburn secured a large sum of money in America with which additional pastors and teachers were employed. The baptisms recorded in the Northwest India Conference for 1893-94-95 were 9,810; 9,076; 8,397; while those from 1900 through 1905 were 6,449; 8,110; 9,111; and 9,098 respectively.

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During the year 1888 nineteen Gujarati *Bhangies* had been baptized in Bombay. Among these were two who later became leaders in a mass movement in Gujarat. Some of the converts returned to Gujarat, where friends and relatives became interested in Christianity and asked for instruction. In 1895, after consultation with the missionaries of the Irish Presbyterian Mission, Methodist missionaries visited the villages in the vicinity of Baroda where *Bhangi* inquirers were living. They found that the movement had spread also among the *Dheds*, and from these two castes numerous inquirers were baptized. By the end of 1895, 602 had been baptized. By 1899 the Methodist community in Gujarat numbered 5,321. In 1903 it had increased to 16,000, and in 1905 there were more than 19,000. The largest number of baptisms occurred in 1901, when 6,291 persons received baptism. The majority of these were baptized from among candidates who had been kept waiting for more than two years and were from villages in which Christian work had already been done. In many of these villages Christians were living.¹

4. A variety of circumstances combined to produce the mass movements within the territory of the Methodist Episcopal Church. First of all was the fact, already noted, that the Mutiny had created such an attitude of suspicion on the part of educated Indians that the early missionaries of the Methodist Mission gave most of their attention to work among Europeans and among Indians of the Depressed Classes. An early feature of Methodist missionary policy was the establishment of small schools in the villages where non-Christian children were eagerly enrolled. In 1883 President John F. Goucher, of the Woman's College, Baltimore, gave sufficient funds to the Church to establish fifty village schools and endow one hundred special scholarships for boys in Rohilkhand. Money was also given to maintain a central school at Moradabad to which the brightest boys from the villages might be sent. Dr. Goucher supported these schools for a number of years. In Oudh a similar system of schools was

¹"Reports of the Gujarat District," *Minutes of the Bombay Conference of the M. E. Church* (Bombay and Lucknow, 1895-1906). Cited hereafter as *MBC*.

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established by Mr. J. H. Frey, also of Baltimore. From these schools a large number of pastors and teachers, as well as many converts, were recruited. In reporting a large number of baptisms in the Bijnor District in 1889, J. C. Butcher remarked, "All of our baptisms have occurred in connection with the Goucher schools."¹ Another circumstance which led to large accessions from the Depressed Classes was the fact that these people discovered in Christianity an effective way to better their social and economic status. Many of the more spiritually minded members of this class were also motivated by more purely religious purposes. Another factor throughout this period was the frequent occurrence of famine and epidemics of plague and cholera. As a result of these disturbances large numbers of orphans were received into the schools of the Methodist Church. Large sums were raised in America and considerable subsidies were given by the Government of India to the relief work undertaken by the Church. The Central Conference appointed a Committee on Famine Relief to co-ordinate the work being done and to administer the large sums of money which had been contributed for this cause. Large numbers of widows and orphans accepted the Christian faith and were received into the Methodist Church. The number seeking church membership in Gujarat became so large in 1899 and 1900 that practically no one from the famine group was baptized until those in charge were convinced of the sincerity of motives.² There can be no doubt that the action of the General Conference of 1888 in giving Missionary Episcopal Supervision to the Methodist Church in India also influenced the movement greatly. The co-ordination of educational and evangelistic activities on an India-wide scale made possible by the Central Conference must also be considered a contributing factor.

The large number of inquirers and of those who sought admission into membership in the Church, as well as the fact that the majority of preachers and teachers were of such

¹Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 202; *MNIC*, 1890, p. 45.

²*MBC*, 1900, p. 22; *Ibid.*, 1901, p. 48; *MCC*, 1900, p. 55.

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humble attainments as to require careful supervision, soon forced upon the leaders of the Church the necessity of establishing detailed tests for those who were to be baptized and received into probationary membership. These requirements are summarized in the words of Bishop Warne:

Before we receive by baptism one of these groups, we require that certain conditions be met. All heathen shrines in the *mohalla*, or caste ward, have to be torn down by the people themselves and every symbol of idolatry destroyed before we baptize anyone. Every *chutia*—the tuft of hair left long on the crown of the head by means of which the soul is believed to be drawn from the body after death, and which is an ever present symbol of Hinduism—is cut off, and every charm and every symbol of idolatrous worship on the necks and arms of the women and children are removed before baptism. The *chaudhries*, or head men of the village, are required to promise for the *mohalla*, and each individual for himself, that heathen shrines will not be rebuilt in their *mohalla*, and that there will be in it no more heathen rites of worship. Each individual is definitely asked before receiving baptism, "Do you cheerfully accept baptism and promise to obey and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior?" Each one professes to have accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Each individual is asked, "Are you willing to suffer persecution?" And all clearly understand that persecution is inevitable. They answer, "Yes, I will endure persecution." Each one is asked, "Will you give to the support of the work of sending the gospel to others?" and an affirmative answer is given. No one is baptized who has more than one wife.

The amount which they are required to know concerning Christian teaching before baptism varies. To have simple villagers memorize before baptism the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed, we have always had as an ideal, but we have found it very difficult to attain. Yet we hold to the idea of their being acquainted with that teaching and also having a knowledge of the story of Christ's life, with particular reference to His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and when they know enough about these things to be prepared to comply with the conditions, we consider them suitable candidates for baptism.¹

It will be necessary at a later period to examine critically the results of the Mass Movement as it affected the ecclesiastical and

¹Warne, *India's Mass Movement*, pp. 9 f.

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administrative history of the Methodist Church in India. It will be sufficient at this time to note several of the factors in the Methodist system which materially influenced the experience of this Church in its Mass Movement activities. In the first place, in the United Provinces especially, the Christian families are widely scattered, and are distributed over so large a territory, that the pastors are severely handicapped in performing their pastoral duties among them. It is a peculiar fact that only a limited number of families of Sweepers or *Chamars* are to be found in each village, their profession limiting the number who could find employment. As a consequence, great difficulty has been experienced in gathering together a sufficient number of Christian converts from these castes to support a pastor or organize a program of worship. Then again, loose administration of discipline prevailed in many sections of the Methodist Church because the Christian community almost from the beginning of the Mass Movement has exceeded the strength of the ministerial staff. The peculiar Methodist system which produced frequent changes in pastors, presiding elders, and circuit leaders seriously interfered with the administration of discipline in Mass Movement areas. The necessity which the Methodist Church faced in raising up pastors and teachers from among the Mass Movement converts led to the production of a staff which was not sufficiently educated nor gifted to devise adequate programs, nor to carry out effectively those which their leaders handed down to them. And finally, the Episcopal areas were so large and the Episcopal supervision so inadequately provided for by the General Conference, the conditions existing in the different sections of the church so varied, that unified programs could not be worked out, and the bishops were unable to give personal attention to local situations. As a consequence, the task of supervision was often placed in the hands of those who through lack of education or experience were unable to cope with the gigantic problems which confronted the Methodist Episcopal Church during this formative period of her history.¹ While the

¹The standards from which these judgments have largely been drawn are set forth by Dr. Pickett in his chapter on "Ecclesiastical Administration and Policy," *op. cit.*, pp. 235-64.

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Mass Movements gave to this Church the greatest problems she had yet had to face, at the same they created for her her largest opportunities. And while it is possible to point to numerous failures on the part of her leaders, yet one cannot but be impressed with what they were able to accomplish with insufficient funds and with a staff limited both in size and experience.

2. Organizational Developments as a Result of Mass Movements

1. It is but natural that the organizational development of the Methodist Episcopal Church should have reflected the influence of the Mass Movements. The baptism of large numbers of converts in Northwest India and in Gujarat had carried the Church into new territory. New circuits and new districts had been organized in those areas already occupied. Consequently, the Central Conference of 1892 memorialized the General Conference of that year to organise five Annual Conferences in India. It was proposed that the boundaries of the North India Conference and the Bombay Conference be so adjusted that two new Conferences would be set up—the Bombay and the Northwest India Conferences. Because the work in Burma had developed rapidly the Bengal Conference was to be called the Bengal Burma Conference.¹ In presenting this memorial to the General Conference Bishop Thoburn made a practical suggestion, which, though not at that time adopted, has now won the general approval of the Church and will probably soon be adopted. It is of sufficient importance to be quoted:

The only practical objection which will suggest itself to this increase of Conferences in India is the consequent increase in the number of delegates to this body to which India will thus become entitled. We recognize this fully, and are prepared to forego in a measure our privileges in return for the favor which we ask. While we deem it of vital importance to be represented in this body, we venture to suggest that our delegates be limited to a fixed number, and that these be elected by our Central Conference instead of the Annual Conferences, as at present.²

¹MCC, 1892, p. 26.

²JCC, XXI (1892), 387.

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The request of the Central Conference was granted, and the new Conferences were authorized.

On December 22, 1892, the South India Conference met in Bombay. On the first day of its session the Bombay Conference was organized, and held its sessions in the forenoons while the South India Conference met in the afternoons.¹ The beginning of the work in the Bombay Presidency under William Taylor has already been noted. During this period a church for English-speaking people had been erected in Baroda. In 1888 vernacular work in Gujarat was opened by C. E. Delamenter. The Mass Movements which sprang up in 1895 came under the supervision of E. F. Frease. In 1899 and 1900 famine conditions existed in Gujarat. Evangelistic activities were suspended, and all the energies of the Church were given to famine relief. From 1901 the work in Gujarat developed rapidly, and was among the most promising in the Bombay Conference.²

Methodist missionary activity in Burma was undertaken by J. M. Thoburn in 1879 in response to the request of a group of Christians in Rangoon. Dr. Thoburn and F. A. Goodwin joined the Reverend and Mrs. R. E. Carter, who had been sent out to Rangoon by the Missionary Society, and a series of evangelistic services were held. The work in Burma grew, and was incorporated within the bounds of the South India Conference. When the Bengal Conference was set up in 1888, Tonghu, Rangoon, and Singapore were included in that Conference as the Burma District, with W. F. Oldham as the Presiding Elder. In 1893 the boundaries of the Bengal Conference were readjusted, and the Bengal Burma Conference was erected. Included in its territory were Bengal, Bihar, and Burma. The first session of the Conference was held in Calcutta, February 2-6, 1893, under the presidency of Bishop Thoburn. In 1900 the Central Conference memorialized the General Conference to organize the Burma District of the Bengal Burma Conference into a Mission Conference. Permission was given, and in February 1901 the

¹*MBC*, 1892, p. 5.

²*Ibid.*, 1906, pp. 63 f.

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Burma Mission Conference was organized by Bishop Warne. The territory in Bengal and Bihar was now designated the Bengal Conference.¹

For a short period the Malaysian field was considered within the bounds of the Methodist Episcopal Church of India. In 1885 Dr. Thoburn and W. F. Oldham held services in Singapore, and organized a small congregation. The South India Conference of 1884 had decided to open a "foreign mission" in Malaysia and appointed Oldham to that work on the self-support basis. The work in this area was organized into a Mission in 1889, and into a Mission Conference in 1893. In 1902 the Malaysia Annual Conference was set up.²

Mass Movement converts moved across the Ganges from Rohilkhand and settled in the Kasganj, Agra, Meerut, and Aligarh Districts. Mass Movements resulted in this territory, and the converts were gathered into churches. New presiding elders' districts were organized. It was decided to include this region within the bounds of a new Conference, and in January, 1893, the Northwest India Conference was set up. The work was divided into seven districts: the Agra, Ajmere, Allahabad, Bulandshahr, Kasganj, Meerut, and Mussoorie Districts. At this time the Methodist Church in that Conference contained a Christian community of 15,066 adults employing 602 paid workers, and owned property valued at Rs. 314,147. In 1906, so greatly had the church grown, there was a Christian community of 76,662 with 1,451 paid workers (53 Indian members of Annual Conference, 16 missionaries, 234 local preachers, 250 exhorters, 332 male and 485 women teachers), and the property was valued at Rs. 1,016,569.³

The South India Conference continued to expand her territory and to occupy new stations within her bounds. In 1898 the Godavery District was formed, consisting of the native state

¹B. M. Jones, "Story of the Burma Mission Conference," *India Mission Jubilee*, pp. 227-29; Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-73; MCC, 1900, p. 48.

²W. E. Horley, "Story of Malaysian Mission Conference," *India Mission Jubilee*, pp. 233-39; Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

³*Minutes of the Northwest India Conference of the M. E. Church* (Lucknow, 1893); P. M. Buck, "Story of the Northwest India Conference," *India Mission Jubilee*, p. 197.

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of Bastar and of portions of the Central Provinces, and the Nizam's Dominions. Later the Raipur District was organized. In 1900 the Raichur District was set up, and in 1903 the Kanarese District was formed in Mysore. The Belgaum District was taken over from the Bombay Conference in 1904. But large portions of this newly gained territory were cut off to form new Conferences. The South India Conference has been called the "Mother of Conferences." In 1888 the work in Bengal, Burma and the Straits Settlement was cut off to form the Bengal Conference. The Bombay Conference was organized from part of her territory in 1892. And in 1905 the Central Provinces Mission Conference was formed by putting together the Godavery and Raipur Districts of the South India Conference with the Central Provinces District of the Bombay Conference. In spite of these various losses the South India Conference contained in 1906 a Christian community of five thousand employing nearly five hundred workers, and owned property valued at Rs. 895,000.¹

The Central Conference of 1904 memorialized the General Conference of that year to form a Mission Conference in the Central Provinces. The request was granted, and the Central Provinces Mission Conference was organized by Bishop Warne in Khandwa, January 27, 1905.²

2. During the period from 1888 to 1906 the Central Conference had assumed larger and larger importance in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. The Conference of 1889 was composed of twenty-nine ministerial and lay delegates, that of 1904 of seventy-one. The Conference of 1889 represented four Annual Conferences, that of 1904 seven. The Conference of 1889 appointed three Boards and seven Standing Committees, that of 1904 appointed eight Boards and Commissions, fifteen Standing Committees and five Special Committees. While the Central Conference during this period exercised increasingly

¹D. O. Ernsberger, "Story of the South India Conference," *India Mission Jubilee*, pp. 182-83.

²*Minutes of the Central Provinces Mission Conference of the M. E. Church* (Madras Publishing House, 1905); T. S. Johnson, "Central Provinces Mission Conference," *India Mission Jubilee*, pp. 219 f.; *JGC*, XXIV (1904), 455.

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larger powers of administration and control no special legislation concerning the authority of the Central Conference was enacted by General Conference. The North India Conference in 1900 adopted a resolution requesting the General Conference to amend the Discipline in its section on Central Conferences to provide that the Conference shall meet at least once in four years. Until this time the sessions had been held every two years. The Central Conference of 1900 memorialized the General Conference to the same effect, and the Discipline was so amended.¹

3. The Constitution of the Central Conference of 1889 provided that:

An Executive Committee shall be appointed at each session of the Central Conference for the ensuing two years, to have cognizance of such interests as may demand attention in the interim of the meetings of the Central Conference—said Committee to consist of six members, two to be chosen from each Annual Conference, who shall have power to fill vacancies in their number in the interim of the meetings of the Conference.

In 1889 this provision was amended so that each Annual and Mission Conference should elect one delegate. Power was also given to the Executive Committee to fill any vacancies which might occur in the Boards of the Conference, unless other provision was made for this act. The Central Conference of 1904 revised this article of its Constitution so as to provide that:

An Executive Board for the Central Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Southern Asia, shall be appointed, composed of the following members:—

(a) The Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (b) the Treasurers of the Missionary Society, for the several Annual and Mission Conferences, (c) the Treasurers of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, for the several Annual and Mission Conferences, (d) the Corresponding Secretaries of the several Annual and Mission Conferences, provided, however, that where the same person is Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary, the Conference may elect one member, (e) the Treasurer and Secretary of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board shall meet at least once a year.....

¹*MCC*, 1889, 1900, 1904; *JGC*, XXIII (1900), 429; *MNIC*, 1900, p. 18.

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Powers.—

(a) That the Executive Board shall have the administration of Special, Famine and all other connectional funds. (b) The Board shall be the official representative of all the interests of our church in Southern Asia, not otherwise provided for, between the sessions of the Central Conference. (c) The Board shall have power to fill vacancies in all Central Conference boards and committees not otherwise provided for. (d) The Executive Board shall be registered under Act VI 1882, as a board of trustees to hold all property of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia, not deeded to the Missionary Society, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society or other regularly constituted boards of trustees.

The same Conference adopted a Memorandum of Association or Constitution of the Executive Board so that it might be incorporated under the laws of the Government of India.¹ This newly created Board has played a very important part in the administrative history of the Church, but it is sufficient at this time to give only the details of its organization and to reserve till later a record of its activities.

3. The Missionary Episcopacy

1. Few topics caused more discussion in the sessions of the Central and Annual Conferences in India and the General Conference in America between the years 1888 and 1906 than that of Episcopal Supervision of the mission fields. The Committee on Episcopacy of the General Conference of 1888 had carefully defined and limited the episcopal jurisdiction of the Missionary Bishop. He is not a General Superintendent, nor is he subordinate to, but co-ordinate with the General Superintendents in the field to which he is appointed. He is assigned to a specific field and may exert his authority only so long as he is presiding over Conferences of that field. He is to co-operate with the Missionary Society in the same way that a General Superintendent does, but unlike him is not a member *ex-officio* of the Missionary Society. On the recommendation of the Committee on Missions the General Conference balloted for the election of a Missionary

¹ MCC. 1889, p. 28; 1894; 1904, pp. 53-57.

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Bishop for India and Malaysia, and James M. Thoburn was elected.¹

The election of Bishop Thoburn was enthusiastically received in India. The Central Conference of 1889 expressed its approval and prophesied that a new era would result, for in the possession of a resident bishop the Church in India had received its much-needed completion. The Conference regretted, however, that legislation had not been enacted securing for its bishop the same relation to the Missionary Society enjoyed by the General Superintendents, and hoped that the omission would be remedied so that India might be represented in the councils of the Missionary Society. Bishop Thoburn himself felt that the establishment of the Missionary Episcopacy had supplied "the missing link in making the church organization in India complete."² The North India Conference in 1892 expressed entire satisfaction with the plan of Missionary Episcopacy which during the quadrennium had produced more than 22,000 increase in membership and the employment of twelve hundred new workers.³ The Central Conference of that same year believed that this plan of administration had "passed far beyond the stage of an experiment and gives entire and unqualified satisfaction." Yet the Conference memorialized the General Conference to take such action as would secure for their bishop the same standing in the General Missionary Committee as that accorded to the General Superintendents.⁴ There were those both in India and America who felt that there should not be two types of bishop in the Methodist system, and that all bishops should have the same dignity. They urged that Bishops Taylor and Thoburn be elected General Superintendents. But the Committee on Episcopacy

¹JGC, XX (1888), 396, 438, 332. Bishop T. B. Neely, who was chairman of the Committee on Episcopacy in 1888 and who was the author of its report to the General Conference that year, has made an exhaustive study of the subject of Episcopal Supervision in the mission fields of the M. E. Church. See his *The M. E. Church and Its Foreign Missions*.

²MCC, 1889, pp. 8, 15.

³*Ibid.*, 1892, p. 42.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 26 f.

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voted unfavorably on the proposal, and no action to this effect was taken by the General Conference of 1892.¹

2. Proposals that the supervision of the mission fields be given again to bishops resident in America were made frequently during the ensuing quadrennium, with the result that Bishop Thoburn, in addressing the Central Conference of 1896, pointed out that any plan of episcopal supervision to be effective in the mission field must include the selection of a bishop who had had actual experience in missionary work, who will reside within the bounds of the field of which he has jurisdiction, and who will not be subject to such a brief term of service as to make continuity of administration impossible.² The requirements here enunciated by Bishop Thoburn became determinative in future discussions of the subject.

The Central Conference of 1896 again gave its approval to the plan of Missionary Episcopacy:

The success of the past eight years in this field is perhaps unparalleled in the history of the Missions of our Church. While no one agency can claim a monopoly as the cause of such success, still it is but a clear matter of history that the occupation of many new places, the founding of various important institutions, the undertaking of not a few extensive enterprises, and the accumulation of much valuable property, would not have come to pass, but for our Missionary Bishop; and that our whole field has received a high degree of inspiration from the same source, no one familiar with the facts of the case will question. A peculiar bond of unity characterizes all our work. Our plans and methods are substantially one throughout all our borders.³

This glowing estimate of the benefits which resulted from the closer episcopal supervision now made possible is probably well founded. Viewed in the perspective of history, it is apparent, however, that even the amount of supervision thus afforded was far from adequate. Even those then in places of leadership recognized this fact, and the Central Conference requested the

¹*JGC*, XXI (1892), 438.

²*MCC*, 1896, pp. 42 f.

³*Ibid.*, p. 44.

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General Conference to elect an additional bishop, to be chosen from the missionary body in India. In his report to the General Conference Bishop Thoburn made the same request.¹ But in spite of his impassioned plea for additional missionary bishops for India and Malaysia, the General Conference decided that it was "inexpedient at this time to elect any more Missionary Bishops."² Instead, it enacted a new rule in the Book of Discipline "that once in every quadrennium, and not oftener, unless a serious emergency arise, every Mission over which a Missionary Bishop has jurisdiction, shall be administered conjointly by the General Superintendents and the Missionary Bishop."³ The first representative of the Board of Bishops to visit India under this plan was Bishop Cyrus D. Foss, who was present at several of the Annual Conferences of 1898 and attended the Central Conference of that year. In each of these Conferences he presided jointly with Bishop Thoburn.⁴

The conviction on the part of many leaders of the Church in America continued to grow that there should be some modification of the plan of Episcopal Supervision of the mission fields. It was obvious that the task in India was too great for one man, be he even such a one as Bishop Thoburn. Yet it was believed that the financial burden upon the Missionary Society would be too great if other Missionary Bishops were elected for India. It was proposed by some that two General Superintendents should be sent out from America each quadrennium. But Bishop Thoburn and others in India pointed out that such hasty visits of inspection were no substitute for permanent episcopal administration of the field. The request for additional Missionary Bishops for India had been rejected by the General Conference in 1896 on the basis

¹*MCC*, p. 45; *JGC*, XXII (1896), 325 f.

²*JGC*, XXII (1896), 381.

³*MCC*, 1898, p. 39. This legislation had been requested by the General Missionary Committee in 1891 because the contact between the churches in America and those on the mission fields, formerly secured through the visits of the General Superintendents, had become weakened under the plan of Missionary Episcopacy.

⁴*MNIC*, 1891, p. 16; *MCC*, 1898, pp. 24, 29-30, 41.

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of the added expense which would be involved. As a consequence the various Annual Conferences and the Central Conference which convened before the General Conference of 1900 presented strongly worded memorials to the latter requesting that more extended supervision be given to India. Bishop Thoburn had carried the tremendous burden alone for twelve years. It was evident that he could not carry on longer without assistance. Two additional Missionary Bishops were requested.¹ In addressing the General Conference on this matter Bishop Thoburn earnestly urged that the request of the India Conferences be granted, and generously added:

I propose that the salaries of missionary bishops in Southern Asia be substantially reduced, beginning with my own. If this is done, one objection at least will be removed, and it will become possible to maintain two missionary bishops at no greater cost than that of one general superintendent.²

3. The General Conference of 1900 at last heard the oft repeated request of the Church in India and elected two additional Missionary Bishops, E. W. Parker and F. W. Warne. Had this action been taken even eight years earlier the history of Methodism in India might have been far different. Bishop Parker was never able to take up his official duties. Hardly had he arrived in India when he became ill and had to retire. He died in June of the following year. Because of his illness Bishop Thoburn was unable to return to India till 1904. The duty of Episcopal supervision fell upon the shoulders of Bishop Warne. Again the Conferences in India had to petition the General Conference to elect additional bishops for India. The Central Conference of 1904 requested that two bishops be elected for Southern Asia, exclusive of the Philippines. This request was approved in part by the Committee on Episcopacy, and the General Conference of 1904 elected W. F. Oldham and J. E. Robinson as Missionary Bishops for Southern Asia. Since Bishop Thoburn was not able to return to India, Bishops Warne, Oldham,

¹*MNIC*, 1900; *MCC*, 1900, pp. 23-25, 29.

²*JGC*, XXIII (1900), 347.

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and Robinson so divided the nine Annual and Mission Conferences that the first had supervision of the two Northern Conferences and the Central Provinces Mission Conference, the last of which he organized before the end of that year; the second administered the South India and Malaysia Conferences and the Philippines Mission Conference, while the third presided over the Bombay and Bengal Conferences and the Burma Mission Conference.¹

The confusing problem of the title and powers of the bishops who had Episcopal supervision of the mission fields continued to present itself. A memorial which suggested that the word "Missionary" should be dropped from the title "Missionary Bishop" was rejected by the Committee on Episcopacy in 1900. Another which proposed that the Missionary Bishops be elected General Superintendents received the same treatment. The General Conference of 1904 succeeded no better in solving the problem, and shifted the responsibility by resolving, "That until the General Conference of 1908 shall have taken action upon it, the status of Missionary Bishops shall remain as provided in the Discipline of 1900."²

4. Administration of Finances.

1. The large expansion in membership, the growth in the number of Conferences and of Conference institutions, and the great increase in the number of missionaries and Indian workers greatly multiplied the problems connected with the administration of finances. An almost constant stream of correspondence took place between the Missionary Society and the Treasurers of the Annual Conferences. Memorials were also presented by the various sessions of the Central Conference. A study of the journals and minutes of the Missionary Society and of the various Conferences reveals that among the more important financial problems were : scales of salaries for missionaries and for Nationals,

¹MCC, 1904, p. 36; JGC, XXIV (1904), 350, 425, 656; Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 278-80.

²JGC, XXIII (1900), 422; *Ibid.*, XXIV (1904), 410.

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the best methods of securing, remitting, and distributing mission funds, requests for permission to secure special gifts for special objects, provision for the support of the widows and orphans of missionaries, sanitarium expenses, allowances for the education of missionary children, allowances for travel to and from America on furlough, loans for educational institutions, more equitable distribution of "cuts" in missionary appropriations, reimbursing the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society for the outgoing expenses of their missionaries who marry missionaries of the Missionary Society, furlough allowances, legislation concerning the Finance Committee, and concerning the division of the Missionary Society into Home and Foreign sections.¹

Several efforts were made during this period to improve the method of handling the funds sent to India by the Missionary Society. In 1888 D. W. Thomas was appointed by the Society Treasurer for the three Conferences in India: the North India, South India, and Bengal Conferences.² This action was intended to secure a certain amount of uniformity in dealing with the problem of finance. The North India Conference, in 1891, reconstructed its Finance Committee with the approval of the Missionary Society. The North India plan was later adopted by the other Conferences of India, and has remained substantially unchanged from that date. It is significant in that it increased the number of Nationals on the Committee. The chairman of the Committee is to be the Bishop having supervision of the Conference. The Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary of the Conference are to be members, "together with the Presiding Elders and six others, three Hindustani and three Foreign, to be elected by ballot by the Conference from double the number, that is, twelve members, six being Hindustani and six being Foreign nominated by the Cabinet." The duties of the Finance Committee were to make out estimates for the work and submit

¹MMS, VIII, 358, 445; February 19, June 18, October 15, 1889; April 15, July 15, September 16, December 16, 1890; XIV, 30-31, 129, 221-22, 407, 479-80; XVI, 15-16, 19-20, 163, 288-89; XVIII, 209-10, 427-29; XX, 306-8; XXI, 454; *JGC*, 1904, pp. 488, 655; *MCC*, 1889, pp. 34-35; 1894, p. 71; 1896, pp. 39-40.

MMS, VIII, 296.

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the same to the Missionary Society, distribute the appropriations according to the action of the General Committee and Board of Managers, sanction the return of missionaries from furlough, sanction the erection of all buildings, and fix the salaries of preachers and exhorters other than missionaries.¹ The adoption of this plan put a larger responsibility for the distribution of funds, a large proportion of which came from abroad, in the hands of Nationals, for the elected members of the Committee were now equally National and Foreign, and an increasing number of the Presiding Elders were Nationals. This system of the Methodist Episcopal Church has probably given to Nationals larger experience in handling considerable sums of money than is the case in those Churches where Missionary appropriations are distributed by missionary members of "Missions", but on the other hand, it has probably also produced the tendency to depend on foreign funds rather than self-support.

2. In addressing the Central Conference of 1894 Bishop Thoburn called attention to the fact that serious difficulty had recently been experienced in reference to the titles by which some of the real estate of the Church was held. At the outset all property had been deeded to the Missionary Society. When, however, churches and parsonages were built without aid from the Society, a great deal of the property was placed in the hands of trustees, in accordance with the provisions of the Discipline. In the meantime the Church began to acquire school property which could not be legally held by trustees of church property. This led to the plan of appointing trustees under Act XXI of 1860 to hold and control such property. But recently some valuable real estate had come into the possession of the Church which could not be held under any of the previous provisions. In order to meet this difficulty Bishop Thoburn suggested the creation of a Financial Board of the Central Conference which would legally be empowered to hold property for the Church. In accordance with this suggestion the Central Conference organized such a Board, consisting of the Bishop and four ministers

¹*MNIC*, 1891, pp. 64 f.; *MMS*, XIII, 403-7.

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and four laymen. Its duties should be to hold and control for the benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India, all donations, bequests, funds and properties that might be acquired by the Church, unless otherwise provided for.¹ During the following quadrennium the Financial Board was set up, a Constitution was adopted, and the organization was registered under the laws of the Government of India. The headquarters of the Board were placed at Calcutta. In 1900 the Central Conference approved of the recommendation that additional Financial Boards be set up with headquarters at Lucknow, Bombay, and Madras.² From the date of its inception the Financial Board has proved a most valuable organization in the Methodist policy of financial administration.

3. During the closing years of the nineteenth century a variety of circumstances combined to create a very serious financial crisis for the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. After struggling for a number of years to maintain its original plan of self-support the South India Conference agreed to accept subsidies from the Missionary Society. Hardly had the Conference launched upon an ambitious program of expansion when the Society found it necessary to decrease its appropriations. This created a condition of misunderstanding and anxiety on the part of the Conference. The mass movements in North India and Gujarat created the need for large sums of money for additional preachers and teachers. Then came seasons of famine and epidemics of plague and cholera, creating the necessity for a program of relief for members of the Christian community and for non-Christian neighbours. The fact that the membership of the Methodist Church in India had been drawn largely from a poverty-stricken group made it impossible to hope to raise locally the large sums of money required. Urgent appeals were sent to the Missionary Society. But the Society was itself in difficulties. The missionary work of the Methodist Episcopal Church had advanced in all parts of the world much faster than the income of the Society had been augmented. Other fields were making

¹*MCC*, 1894, pp. 34-35, 56.

²*Ibid.*, 1898, pp. 85-88; 1900, p. 38.

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requests just as urgent as those from India. And to add to the difficulty, these were years of financial depression in the United States, and the Methodists in that country were unable to give as generously as formerly.

Somewhat contrary to the policies of the Missionary Society the missionaries from the various fields began to appeal directly to the church membership in America. William Butler had made such appeals on behalf of the Orphanages in India, but all the special gifts received for this purpose were handled by the Treasurer of the Society. It was Bishop Thoburn who inaugurated the system of Special Gifts on a large scale. He was an eloquent speaker, and generous gifts followed his addresses in America. Bishop Warne also proved successful in securing gifts for special projects in India. About 1895 there was created a Special Fund known as the "Bishop Thoburn Fund," of which Rockwell Clancy was appointed Secretary. Special literature was prepared and circulated in America. The annual Reports of the Presiding Elders were sent out in large numbers. The correspondence of this period would indicate that the Missionary Society and the leaders of the Church in America did not give hearty approval to the plan, and Bishop Thoburn felt led to use vigorous language in addressing the General Conference of 1896 on the subject. Eventually the authorities in America had to formulate legislation in harmony with the plan of Special Gifts, but that came later. The situation was eased somewhat when the Missionary Society proposed and the General Conference of 1900 approved the "Twentieth Century Fund" by which special amounts were raised for missions during the opening years of the new century. The Central Conference in 1904 expressed the appreciation of the Indian Church for the increased appropriations and for the renewed interest, but added, "Nevertheless we must again call the attention of the Church to the fact that even the present increased appropriations are utterly inadequate to the needs of the work on its present basis."¹

¹MMS, VI, 433; XVI, 163; XX, 306-7; JGC, XXII (1896), 327-29, 332; XXIV (1904), 488, 658; MCC, 1896, p. 39; 1904, pp. 57 f. *Reports of the Presiding Elders of the M. E. Church in Southern Asia* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1895-1901).

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4. The period from 1888 to 1906 witnessed some progress in the matter of self-support. The question was considered at the various sessions of the Annual Conferences, and the Committee on the State of the Church of the Central Conference brought the matter before the attention of the Church at each session of the Conference. Efforts were made to teach mass movement converts the obligation of supporting the Church. Yet the progress toward the ideal of making the Church entirely independent of foreign funds proved to be very slow, and the Committee on the State of the Church had to report to the North India Conference in 1903 that

village Christians give very little thought to self-support, and regard the mission as a sort of agency for furnishing them with free teaching. The idea of membership in an organization which brings financial obligation upon them has not been developed to any great extent.

The total amount raised by the Methodist Church in India for ministerial support and all other benevolences in 1903 was reported as Rs. 164,000.¹

5. Mission Comity.

The policy of expansion adopted under the leadership of Taylor and Thoburn resulting in the establishment of churches in the larger cities of India, and the mass movement activities in North India produced for the Methodist Episcopal Church some serious problems of Mission Comity. Reference has already been made to the manner in which Thoburn justified the decision of the North India Conference to undertake work in Cawnpore and other cities not included in the original territory selected by William Butler.² Feelings of resentment against this policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church received forceful expression at the Third Decennial Missionary Conference held in Bombay in 1892. Discussion of the subject seems to have been general

¹"Committee on the State of the Church" *MCC*, 1889-1904; 1904; p. 82; *MNIC*, 1903, p. 52.

²Thoburn, *India and Malaysia*.

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throughout the missions of India. In February, 1890, Bishop Thoburn had published an article in the *Harvest Field* which attempted to show the failure of the "traditional policy" of assigning a separate field to each missionary society, and urged the adoption of a policy of co-operation in which there would be no artificial arrangements and boundaries. All missions would work in harmony, depending only on public opinion to check unfair encroachment upon the work of other societies. Later the Reverend A. Clifford, of the Church Missionary Society, read a paper before the Calcutta Missionary Conference in which Bishop Thoburn's article was discussed, and in which the "traditional" policy of Missionary Comity was strongly advocated. Both the Reverend Clifford and Bishop Thoburn were invited to prepare papers to be read before the Decennial Missionary Conference in 1892. Each presented his former paper, slightly revised. The reading of these papers was followed by three speeches and general discussion. An account of the whole proceeding is to be found in the *Report of the Conference*.¹ The tenor of the discussion was strongly in favor of the continuance of Rules of Comity rather than the adoption of the policy proposed by Bishop Thoburn. References were made to various infringement of rules of comity. The Methodist Episcopal Church was not excluded from criticism in this matter. The Reverend F. Ashcroft, of the Rajputana Presbyterian Mission, said that the Methodists had entered the territory of his Mission in Rajputana. It might be asked, he said, why should they not?

Well, their methods are different from ours. We, Presbyterians, rightly or wrongly, believe a man should not be baptized until we think he understands what he is doing and is sincere in his action. Our Methodist brethren do not seem to think that necessary. They baptize in the hope of future real conversions. So they have baptized in the villages, round about Ajmere, hundreds whom we would never dream of baptizing, and thus in the same district we have men in our mission baptized and called Christians who at the very most in the other would be only probationers. This must result in

¹*Report of the Third Decennial Missionary Conference* (Bombay, 1893), pp. 590-636.

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evil, and such a case would have to be dealt with on its merits by a Missionary Comity Committee.¹

The facts in the case would seem to indicate that a real difference in missionary policy served to bring the Methodist missionaries into situations where misunderstanding might easily arise. William Taylor felt justified in receiving into membership in the Methodist Church those who were "nominal" members of other denominations on the grounds that they were not receiving the pastoral care which they desired. Bishop Thoburn felt that the Methodist Church was obligated to accept opportunities to work among the Depressed Classes. "We are bound to go to such men when they appeal to us. If we abandon this work no one else would take it up."² The difference in method of dealing with inquirers from the Mass Movements also caused difficulty. Several of the speakers at the Decennial Conference referred to the fact that poorly trained persons calling themselves Christian caused embarrassment to the Christian cause. Another cause of friction was the employment of those as workers who belonged to other denominations. And still another basis of misunderstanding was the practice of receiving into membership those who were being disciplined by another Church. The custom of engaging in bazaar preaching or holding evangelistic services in towns or villages within the territory of another Church was also condemned. The Methodist Episcopal missionaries and preachers were openly or indirectly accused of being guilty of several of these practices.³ Bishop Thoburn was deeply grieved by these accusations of breach of Mission Comity, and referred to them in strong terms in his Episcopal addresses to the Central Conference in 1894 and 1896. He justified the action of the Church in crossing the "artificial boundaries" established by other missions before Methodism entered India. But he urged Presiding Elders to use extreme care in employing those who may have been members of other Churches.⁴

¹*Ibid.*, p. 617.

²*MCC*, 1894, p. 38.

³*Report of Decennial Missionary Conference*, pp. 618, 622, 623, 625.

⁴*MCC*, 1894, pp. 35-38; 1896, p. 38.

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In criticising the policy of expansion followed by the Methodist Julius Richter, the Church historian, said:

Whilst in 1856 this Society had not a single representative in India, in 1881 it could point to thirty-two, and nine years later to sixty-five ordained missionaries, and had thus taken precedence of every society then working in India save one. But what a difference between it and the Basle Missionary Society, which followed closely in its wake, and had sixty-one ordained missionaries in the same year. In the German Society there was systematic limitation to given districts with a uniform and straightforward method of work; whereas the Methodist launched enterprises in every part and corner of the country, sometimes recklessly intruding upon the spheres of labour of older societies, yet still with consuming zeal, with great financial resources, and at times under very capable leaders.¹

Indirectly Richter has made a criticism of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India which is fundamental. While in the Basle Society there was a systematic and uniform plan of work, in the whole program of the Methodist Church during this period there is little evidence of a clearly stated and carefully pursued missionary policy. The Society in America gave very little help in this direction, and the missionaries in India were too greatly absorbed in the magnitude of the details of the immediate tasks to give themselves seriously to the problem of formulating a systematic and uniform policy. The individual Presiding Elder was given unusual freedom in determining whether or not to enter new territory, open new institutions, employ new workers, or baptize a new body of converts. The Annual and Central Conferences gave their time largely to hearing reports of what had been undertaken or accomplished rather than to the more fundamental task of formulating programs for future activities. It was not until 1912 that a committee of the Central Conference advised caution in the "reckless" extension of the work and urged a policy of concentration. As a result of this lack of policy, rather than a deliberate determination to infringe upon the right of others, the Methodist Episcopal Church became involved in misunderstandings concerning rules of comity.

¹Julius Richter, *A History of Missions in India* (New York: Revell, 1908) p. 212.

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6. Indigenous Leadership

No one during this period held before the Church the ideal of making Methodism indigenous more ardently than did Bishop Thoburn. When faced with the task of securing ministers and teachers for the Mass Movement converts he turned immediately and confidently to Nationals who had been converted under the ministry of the Methodist Church. From the date of his election to the episcopacy large numbers of Nationals were received into the Methodist ministry. In 1894 he was able to say:

I have been permitted to set apart by the solemn act of ordination over two hundred men as ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.....Hundreds of other preachers, not yet eligible for ordination, have been added to our list of workers. We are adding more than a hundred new preachers to our numbers every year.¹

There were those in India and America who believed that the Methodist Conferences were too lax in ordaining Nationals and in receiving them into Conference membership, but Bishop Thoburn stoutly defended the practice.² In 1892 legislation was enacted by the General Conference which authorized the Annual Conferences in India, with the concurrence of the Bishop presiding, to elect to deacons' or elders' orders local preachers who had been engaged in the regular work for two years or four years respectively.³ This gave a certain dignity to those ministers, members of District Conferences, who did not possess the qualifications necessary to admit them to membership in Annual Conferences.

The North India Conference moved forward more rapidly than any other in appointing Nationals to places of leadership and responsibility. In 1888 there were forty-nine Nationals on the Conference Roll, but in 1906 there were eighty Nationals who held membership in the Annual Conference. In addition there were fifty local preachers and exhorters. The total number of Christian workers in the Conference was six hundred and twenty

¹*MCC*, 1894, p. 41.

²*Ibid.*, 1900, p. 26; *JGC*, 1896, pp. 321 f., Thoburn, *India* pp. 245-55, 557-59.

³*JGC* XXI (1892), 471.

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Nationals and twenty Europeans, or thirty-one Nationals to one foreigner. There were nine districts and ninety-one circuits, and only twelve of the circuits were in charge of Europeans. A number of the districts were under the supervision of Nationals.¹

In the whole Southern Asia field there were in 1906 166 Nationals who were members of Annual Conferences, 1,946 other ministers, and 2,724 other workers. The great majority of these Nationals were Indians. Indian ministers were now holding every ministerial office open to Methodist ministers except that of the Episcopacy, and there was no legislation which would have prevented a National from being elected even to this office had he been otherwise qualified. The plan of Conference membership, transferred to India from America, made it possible for Nationals to be appointed to the various ministerial duties in the Conference as they became qualified by ability and experience, without further legislation. Thus, Nationals were to be found serving as "preachers-in-charge," "circuit leaders," and "presiding elders," and holding membership on the Finance Committees, the Conference Relations Committees, and all other responsible committees and boards of the Conferences. In this respect the Methodist Episcopal Church had already solved a problem which still troubles a number of those denominations which have both a "Church" and a "Mission."

7. The India Mission Jubilee

In the *Indian Witness* for June 25, 1903, there appeared an editorial which suggested that the semi-centennial of the establishment of the Methodist Church in India be fittingly celebrated at the close of the year 1906. It was proposed that the Central Conference in 1904 should appoint the necessary committees on arrangements. The proposal was well received throughout the Church, and the various Annual Conferences expressed their approval and suggested numerous features for the occasion. For some unknown reason, however, the Central Conference failed to take any action on the matter. It was then determined to make

¹Messmore, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

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the celebration a matter of interest to the whole Methodist Episcopal Church, and a resolution was presented to the General Conference in 1904 which constituted the Executive Board of the General Conference a Commission to arrange for the India Mission Jubilee, and authorized the raising of a Jubilee Thank Offering of \$200,000 for advancing the work in India. This resolution received the hearty approval of the General Conference.¹ The General Missionary Committee, in November, 1904, appointed a commission to co-operate in arranging for the celebration. It was decided to hold the Jubilee in Bareilly in the cold season of 1906-07. More than fifty official and unofficial visitors came from America. Mrs. William Butler and Bishop Thoburn were among the honored guests. The affair lasted from December 28, 1906 till January 1, 1907, during which time a number of addresses were given and historical papers were read. A valuable volume, *India Mission Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal Church*,² embodies the substance of this material, and proves invaluable to the student of Methodist history. More than three thousand persons were in attendance, and though the majority of those who participated were not Nationals the Jubilee profoundly influenced the whole Church. Inspirational and evangelistic services were numerous. Representatives from other denominations brought greetings from their respective bodies. Methodist leaders from all parts of the Indian Empire were able to meet together in larger numbers than ever before. The total result of the celebration was to inspire the leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church with a new zeal which was to be reflected in advances in many phases of church life and activity. In the history of Methodism in India it proved to be an epoch-making event.

¹JGC, XXIV (1904), 309.

²*India Mission Jubilee of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia*, ed. F. B. Price (Calcutta: Methodist Publishing House, 1907).

CHAPTER IV

Some Significant Movements

1906-1920

A number of significant movements which were to influence greatly the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India took place between the years 1906 and 1920. The period opened with the Jubilee and closed with the Centenary. Nationalism was beginning to make itself felt in India, and the *Swadeshi*¹ Movement was gaining many adherents. The Laymen's Missionary Movement, organized in America, exerted its influence in India. The Jubilee in the Methodist Episcopal Church was followed by a renewed interest in evangelism. Indian Methodists had their part in the World War, and its repercussions were felt in her smallest and most rural congregations. Famine, plague and influenza visited the land, and took their large toll of life. The close of the war witnessed a revival of the nationalistic spirit, and saw the beginning of *Satyagraha*² and the *Swaraj* Movement.³ This growing desire for self-control in the affairs of government could not but have its counterpart in the Christian Churches in India. The close of this period found the indigenous leadership in the Methodist Episcopal Church more vocal than in any preceding period. A further movement of significance was that toward the union of the various Protestant bodies in India.

The year 1920 was, in many respects, a turning point in the history of Indian Methodism. It was in this year that India began to adjust herself to the new Reforms granted her by the British Parliament, that the Non-co-operation Movement assumed large significance, that the Centenary Movement became effective in the Methodist Church in India, that the General Conference

¹Literally, "one's own country," i. e., extolling the virtues of India.

²Interpreted by Mr. Gandhi as "non-violent non-resistance."

³Literally, "self-rule," i. e., "home-rule," or the control of government by Indian officials.

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granted to the Central Conference in Southern Asia new and extensive powers, and established the General Superintendency as the form of Episcopal Supervision for India.

1. The Jubilee and the Revival

The India Mission Jubilee, marking fifty years of Methodist missionary activity in India, closed January 1, 1907, but its influence was felt for many days in all sections of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The visitors from America returned to their own land more deeply impressed with the magnitude of the work being attempted in India, and Methodists of India went back to their work with greater zeal, having been encouraged through fellowship with workers from all parts of India. Although the Central Conferences had brought together representatives from all the Methodist Conferences in Southern Asia, yet Methodist leaders were impressed with the marvellous growth of the Church and with the expanse and complexity of its work in a way never before experienced by them. The bishops were able to report to the Central Conference of 1908 that the Jubilee "was an occasion of profound significance in many important respects."¹

The various activities of the Jubilee had been carried on in a revival atmosphere. Preparation had been made for the Jubilee by means of evangelistic services in many centers. One of the closing meetings of the Jubilee itself was an evangelistic service. During the whole period of the Jubilee, meetings were conducted in *Hindustani* for those who did not understand English. These meetings were attended by three thousand Indian Christians. The consequence of all these evangelistic endeavours was that a revival spirit broke out in many sections of the Methodist Episcopal Church, especially in the North India and Northwest India Conferences. Concerning this the Episcopal Address to the Central Conference of 1908 reported: "More profoundly significant, perhaps, than the Jubilee, has been the widespread

¹ MCC, 1908, p. 34.

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Revival which has made its effects felt in many parts of India during the past year.”¹

The *Indian Witness*, the official organ of the Methodist Church, gave its support to the movement. Its leading editorial of March, 7, 1907, was given to this subject. From time to time articles from the pen of Bishop Warne appeared in its pages, and reports of successes in various parts of the field were given generous space for several years. The General Conference of 1904 had inaugurated a Forward Movement, and had appointed a “Commission on Aggressive Evangelism.” The Central Conference appointed a similar Commission for encouraging evangelism within the Church in India. On March 8, 1908, the Indian Commission on Aggressive Evangelism issued an “Appeal to the Presiding Elders, Missionaries, and Pastors of Southern Asia,” suggesting a programme of evangelism which should culminate in a month of special effort in the month of November.² On February 4, following, Reverend P. M. Buck, the Chairman of the Commission, reported that the plan of setting aside a month for evangelism had proved most successful, and proposed that the month from February 15 till March 15 had been selected for 1909.³ This year witnessed a number of conferences and conventions “for deepening the spiritual life.” Dr. W. A. Mansell, one of the older Methodist missionaries, wrote on “Normal Revivals” to show that in the Methodist Episcopal Church revivals should not be looked upon as extraordinary, but as the ordinary programme of evangelism.⁴

In his report to the Board of Foreign Missions in 1912 Bishop Oldham noted that there had been marked revival movements in many areas in India. There had been large

¹*India Mission Jubilee*, pp. 71-77; *MCC*, 1908, p. 34. A leading figure in this Revival Movement in the Methodist Church was Bishop F. W. Warne. His experiences in this work, as well as many examples of the Revival, are described by him in his *Revival of the Indian Church* (New York, 1907).

²*Indian Witness* (Calcutta: Methodist Publishing House), March 7, 14, 21, 1907; February 27, March 5, 1908. The pages of the *Witness* for 1908 and 1909 contain numerous articles and reports on Aggressive Evangelism.

³*Ibid.*, February 4, 1909.

⁴*Ibid.*, August 19, 1909.

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ingatherings in the Punjab and in parts of Rajputana and the Northwest Provinces. A new mass movement had also begun in the Hyderabad territory of the Church, and gave promise of developing into large proportions.¹ The evangelistic movement went on with increased vigor, and in 1916 the Committee on the State of the Church of the Central Conference expressed its appreciation of the work accomplished by the Commission on Aggressive Evangelism. It also called to the attention of the Church the possibility of using more extensively the various Festivals of the Christian Church, since festivals occupy such a prominent place in Indian life.²

In spite of the distractions of the World War the Methodist Church, with the encouragement of its Commission, carried on its evangelistic program. When, in 1919, Dr. Sherwood Eddy visited India, the Methodist Church co-operated with him in his extensive evangelistic activity. Dr. E. Stanley Jones travelled with him, and other Methodist leaders had their part in his training conferences and meetings.³ And when the Central Conference convened in 1920 the Committee on the State of the Church again expressed its satisfaction with the progress made, recommending the continuance of the plan of a special month of evangelism, and urging larger use of Indian music, indigenous Christian songs, and festivals in the work of evangelism.⁴

The "Revival Meeting," which has characterized Methodism from the days of Wesley, filled an important place in the programme of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India in dealing with two radically different classes, the English-speaking Indian and Anglo-Indian on the one hand, and the mass movement converts on the other. Among the latter it proved especially effective in awakening spiritual life in those who had received Christian baptism while entering rather imperfectly into the

¹*Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1912), p. 49.

²*MCC* 1916, p. 66.

³Dr. Jones reported in the *Witness* of August 13, 1919, that the Eddy Campaigns had occupied a period of six months and covered forty-three places.

⁴*MCC*, 1920, p. 66.

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Christian experience. As a consequence of her active evangelistic programme the Methodist Episcopal Church received a large number of accessions during the period from 1906 to 1920.

2. Nationalism

1. The Nationalist Movement has been so significant in its influence upon the history of the Church that a few of its more important features should be noted, if only in barest outline. Though Nationalism had been growing in India for many years, it is with the opening of the present century that the situation became tense. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, was an able administrator, but he failed to appreciate the aspirations of Indian leaders. A crisis occurred in 1905 when Lord Curzon, for the sake of more efficient administration, but with total disregard for the feelings of the people, divided Bengal into two equal parts. Violent reactions followed. Attacks upon British officials resulted in several deaths; repression was met by further acts of violence; terrorism spread in Bengal and other parts of India. National leaders were divided in opinion as to the next step. At the Surat meeting of the India National Congress¹ in 1907 two parties were formed—the “Constitutionalists,” determined to secure independence of British rule by constitutional methods, and the “Nationalists,” determined, if need be, to resort to more violent means. Because of the seriousness of the situation, in 1909 the Government introduced the Morley-Minto Reforms by which Indians were for the first time admitted to the cabinets of the Secretary of State, the Viceroy, and the Governors; and a certain number of seats in the Legislative Councils were made elective. These Reforms served to restore confidence and to give hopes of better things in the future. The terrorist movement, however, had gained considerable headway and the newspapers of the period record numerous political outrages.²

The growing feeling of confidence was “enormously stimulated by the wise and generous resolution of their Imperial

¹The strongest Nationalist Party in India.

²For example, the *Indian Witness* for February 18, 1909, May 13, 1909, etc.

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Majesties to visit their Indian Empire so that they might themselves announce their elevation to the throne to their Indian subjects, and thereby prove the love and confidence which they bear to them.”¹ The Imperial visitors reached Bombay on December 2, 1911, and after triumphal receptions in the principal cities of India, departed on January 12. Two events of some significance were the *Durbar* in Delhi on December 12, and the announcement that the capital of India was to be transferred from Calcutta to Delhi. The latter produced first stupefaction, then resentment, and finally violent protests on the part of the people of Bengal. Yet the total effect of King George V's visit was beneficial, and the *Bengalee* was able to say: “If war has its glories, peace also has its triumphs, and King George's Indian visit will go down to posterity as one of the most memorable triumphs of peace.”²

The real test of loyalty came at the time of the Great War. All parties forgot their grievances and rallied to the support of Great Britain. One of the surprises of the War was the fact that the Indian Mohammedans forsook their co-religionists of Turkey and joined the ranks of the Allies. Nearly two millions of Indians enlisted, and great sums of money were contributed by princes and people. But a new crisis was provoked when Mrs. Besant suggested her Home Rule Scheme. Old grievances were aired and further causes of discontent were discovered. It was then (August 20, 1917) that the Secretary of State for India came forward with the declaration that,

The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.³

¹*MMC*, 1912, p. 36.

²Quoted by *Indian Witness*, January 16, 1912.

³*Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918), p. 5.

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Though it was not considered expedient by some in India and in England, Mr. Montagu himself came out to India and with the co-operation of the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, formulated the "India Reforms Bill." This provided for dyarchy in several departments, notably Education and Excise, and increased the number of elective seats in the Legislative Councils. But dissatisfaction was expressed with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in many sections of India. And the situation was made more tense when the Government published Bill No. 1 of 1919—the Rowlatt Act—whose purpose was to deal with anarchism and revolutionary tendencies in India. Emergency power was given to the Government to arrest Indian citizens and to hold them without public trial or without privilege of legal defense. Indian leaders were indignant, and Mr. Gandhi, on February 28, 1919, launched his movement of civil disobedience until the acts should be repealed. He intended that his program of *Satyagraha* should be non-violent, but the people of India little understood his ideal, and acts of violence were committed in various sections of the country. Two unfortunate incidents of larger significance occurred. A *hartal*¹ was set for April 6 so that members of the Congress party could explain to groups in the principal cities the meaning of the Movement. In Delhi the *hartal* took place a week earlier, and a riot resulted between those who desired to remain at work and those who wished to observe the *hartal*. In quelling the riot the police fired into the mob and eight Indians were killed. Rioting broke out in various parts of the country, and methods of repression were resorted to. In Amritsar, in the Punjab, a clash occurred between the rioters and the police, resulting in several deaths. The city was put under martial law, and on April 13 an order was issued forbidding all assemblies of the people. That same afternoon a large group of people assembled at *Jallianwala Bagh*. It seems probable that many of them had not heard of the order against assemblies. But General Dyer, who was in charge of the soldiers who had been called in to enforce martial law, without giving the crowd any warning, ordered his soldiers to fire. The

¹An agreement to suspend all business and other public activities.

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firing was continued for several minutes, though many of the surprised Indians made no resistance. Three hundred and seventy-nine people were killed and many more were injured. The Delhi and Amritsar incidents inflamed the Indian people, and gave new impetus to the non-cooperation movement. During the closing months of 1919 and the early part of 1920 India was in turmoil. No subject had much chance to gain public attention which was not closely related to the political situation.

2. It has been seen that, except during the period of the Mutiny, the members and leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India did not consider that Christian missions were closely related to the political situation. Non-Christians in general were inclined to agree with this judgment, and added further, that Christianity "de-nationalized" its converts. It seems probable that so long as the Nationalist Movement did not materially affect their work the Methodist leaders took little notice of it. William Butler had enjoyed the protection of the British Government, and was generous in his praise of the benefits of British rule.¹ Other Methodist writers, from time to time, expressed their indebtedness to the Government for protection and favors.² The grant-in-aid system by which most of the educational work of the Church was subsidised naturally brought the missionaries into sympathy with the program of Government. The consequence was that those National leaders who found themselves opposed to some of the policies of the Government looked upon the missionaries as aliens, and upon the Christian Church as a foreign institution. It is probable, too, that the connectional nature of Methodism caused Indian Methodists to look to America even more than did the members of some other Churches where the ties with the mother Church were not so strong.

It was not until the opening of the twentieth century that official journals of Indian Methodism began to take note of the Nationalist Movement. A leading editorial in the *Indian Witness*

¹Butler, *Land of the Veda*, p. 369.

²For example, J. T. Scott, "India as a Mission Field", *Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York: Carlton and Lanahan), LI (1869), 30-44.

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of April 18, 1907, under the caption, "Elements in the Crisis in the work of Christian Missions in India," notes that

a national spirit has come; a national consciousness is being born. *Swadeshism* is stronger today by far and more general than ever before. The National Movement is not under Government leadership (as in China and Japan), but is partly anti-government as being foreign.

The issue of May 23 contained an article which suggested that missionaries while refraining from taking sides should show their sympathy with the aspirations of the people. An editorial of June 20 concluded that Indian Christians might properly favor the development of Nationalism along constitutional lines. The editor had little sympathy with the terrorist methods being employed in Bengal. The *Witness* of July 4 urged the calling of a conference of Christian workers to consider the missionary situation in view of conditions revealed by recent events, and the leading editorial of July 11 listed several reasons for such a conference.

The Episcopal Address to the Central Conference of 1908 noted that a New East was in the process of evolution, and reminded the Church that the new opportunities and new responsibilities demanded larger missionary statesmanship.¹ While addressing the General Conference later in the year, Bishop Oldham recounted the influence which the victory of Japan over Russia had had upon the minds of the peoples of the Orient and indicated the implications of the resulting nationalism for the work of missions.² Just what part the Methodist missionaries and Indian Christians should take in the political agitation proved to be a most difficult problem. The *Witness* of November 21, 1911, carried an article by Professor S. C. Mukerji of Serampore College entitled, "What should be the attitude of Missionaries toward the political aspirations of the people?" During 1909 the same religious journal had printed a number of articles and reviews on the subject, "Who Should Rule India?" with the statement that the discussion of such a topic deserved space in its pages. Professor

¹MCC, 1908, pp. 32-34.

²JGC, 1908, pp. 843-45.

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Mukerji's article brought numerous letters to the editor of the *Witness*, some of which were printed in the issue of December 12. Though the attitudes of the writers differed widely, the replies all indicated that the missionaries could no longer be indifferent to the political aspirations of the people among whom they labored. For the American missionaries, who were in India as "guests" of the British Government, active participation in political affairs would probably be unwise, but citizens of the Empire should relate themselves intimately to the national life of India. Many of the missionaries regretted that the Indian Christians as a body had kept aloof from the National Movement. If they did not want to enter politics let them at least have a larger part in the social reforms of the day.¹ And the editor of the *Witness* remarked editorially:

It is worth making careful enquiry into this question of the failure of the Church to take any adequate share in the political life of the nation. Possibly a correct interpretation of the situation might reveal to us the necessity to make radical departures from our policies and methods of the past. So far as the Methodist Episcopal Church in India is concerned, the day of larger planning and greater resources represented by the Centenary Movement makes possible a practical consideration of this and allied questions that were not emphasized among our definite objectives previously.²

3. The criticism that Christianity "de-nationalized" its converts took on new significance in the light of the national aspirations of the Indian people. In the earlier days there were those who took pride in the fact that the Christian convert could easily be distinguished from the non-Christian. It now became desirable to discover how closely the Christian could be identified with his non-Christian neighbor. An article by the Reverend Edwin Greaves urging that Christianity in India be freed from Western non-essentials in order that Christianity might become more indigenous stirred up a large amount of correspondence in the pages of the *Indian Witness*.³ That Christians might become

¹For example, F. W. Steinthal, *Indian Witness*, February 25, 1909.

²*Indian Witness*, October 8, 1919.

³Edwin Greaves, "Western Churches and the Universal Christ," *ibid.*, August 26, 1909.

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more closely identified with the life of the country some writers urged Indian Christians to adopt the use of national costumes rather than those in imitation of the West. More fundamental was the advice given in the Episcopal Address to the Central Conference in 1920. After noting that there was an impression among non-Christians that to become Christian was to become denationalized, this address urged:

Let us at this conference set ourselves to do everything in our power to remove any cause for such a false impression. To this end we recommend that, in our schools, we teach our pupils that which is best in Indian art, sculpture, literature and history; that they may grow up to know and loyally love their own country. We also recommend that loyalty be yet more often preached from our pulpits. We urge our editors to sympathetically recognize the best in India.....Lastly, we appeal to all our educated Indian Christians to heartily co-operate in temperance and in all social reforms; to throw themselves into making Christianity indigenous: an integral part of the national life of India, to join in making the Reforms Bill a success, and to out-India the Indians in loyalty to their beloved India.¹

In this same spirit several of the committees brought in their recommendations to the Conference. The Committee on Work among Educated Classes proposed that "a booklet be prepared and published for wide distribution" showing that "Indian Christians can be among the foremost of the loyal Communities of this country in the development of the true national spirit in India." It also urged "that Indian Christian parents and guardians adopt suitable *Indian* names for candidates for baptism." With regard to active participation the same committee suggested,

That in the highest interest of the Indian Christian community of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India, it is their duty to take an active share in the present national development of their country, and with this in view, every encouragement be given to them to take their stand as members of a community among the sister communities for the betterment of India.²

¹MMC, 1920, p. 44.

²*Ibid.*, p. 119.

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The Special Committee on Indian Music recommended that Indian Christian poets be encouraged to write Christian songs for special occasions, that Indian music be taught in the schools, that indigenous melodies and musical instruments be used in the Church service, and that wherever Christian people gather together they be encouraged to sing indigenous Christian songs in the manner common to non-Christians.¹ A Committee on Indian Architecture recommended that the church buildings to be constructed with Centenary funds be erected under the supervision of a committee especially qualified to give guidance in Indian architecture.²

But perhaps the most significant incident was the fact that, as a consequence of a memorial signed by various members of the Central Conference, an informal vote was taken to determine whether or not the time had come for the election of an Indian bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.³ After more than fifty years of leadership under men largely from abroad, the national spirit which demanded larger control in the affairs of state has now awakened to the desire of larger control in religious matters as well. From 1920 this desire for a larger degree of self-control on the part of Nationals was to grow stronger and more vocal, until ten years later the first Indian Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church was elected.

3. The World War, Famine, Plague and Influenza

Reference has already been made to the fact that the World War created a crisis in the Nationalist Movement. It was of extreme importance for the history of Christianity in India that all parties, Hindu and Moslem, laid aside their differences and joined enthusiastically in supporting the Allies. The *Report of the Board of Foreign Missions* for 1914 stated that "the war has resulted in creating a new bond of sympathy between the British and the Indians, growing out of the mutual sharing of the burdens of the war."⁴

¹MCC, pp. 122-24.

²*Ibid.*, p. 124.

³*Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴P. 9.

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Large numbers of Indian Christians volunteered for service, the Methodists alone furnishing more than ten thousand. A company of Christians went from Lahore with an Indian preacher as their chaplain. Students of the Lucknow Christian College (Methodist) served as Y. M. C. A. assistant secretaries in Mesopotamia. Soldiers from Bijnor and other places sent contributions back to their home churches.¹ The leaders of Methodism did their part in instilling a sense of loyalty to the Government in the minds of Indian Methodists. At the request of the Executive Board Bishop J. W. Robinson prepared and presented to the Central Conference of 1916 a resolution on the teaching of loyalty in the Methodist schools. He suggested that text books be used in the schools which impress upon the hearts and minds of students the obligation, privilege and benefits of loyalty to the ruler and government under whom they lived. It was urged that students be taught to salute the Union Jack with appropriate words each day, or at least once a week.² At the same Central Conference a resolution expressing loyalty to the British Government, which the bishops had been requested to prepare, was read by Bishop J. E. Robinson, and on the motion of Mr. N. K. Mukerjee, was adopted by the Conference by a rising vote and the singing of the National Anthem. Copies of the resolution were ordered sent to the Secretary to the Viceroy.³

It is but natural that the War should have gravely affected the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. The Methodist Churches in America diverted much of their money from missionary causes to those nearer at home, with the result that the Board of Foreign Missions was unable to make appropriations as large as were requested by the missionaries in India. The unstable economic conditions due to the War forced up the prices of even the necessities of life. Almost every District Superintendent reported in 1918 and 1919 that Methodist pastors and families were suffering severely as a result of the

¹*RBFM*, 1918, p. 33.

²*MCC*, 1916, p. 14.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 22 f.

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high prices and low salaries which they received. To make matters worse famine broke out in many sections of the country. The Episcopal Address in 1920 reported:

The war, the famine and the influenza have all had their depressing influence on our people during the quadrennium. The famine prices, added to war prices, brought about the most expensive living conditions ever known in India; and the privations of our Indian ministers and the sufferings of our poor village Christians have been nothing less than heart-rending.¹

But Methodist leaders were of the opinion that in spite of temporary hardships the war might bring some lasting benefits. This point of view was represented in an article by Dr. B. T. Badley, writing in the *Indian Witness* of July 23, 1919:

The revolutionary effects of the war on India compel attention. A million and a half of men returning from their unexampled crusade . . . have brought back with them ideas, plans, and resolves that will transform the very structure of Indian life. What the cities have been feeling for a few decades will now be realized by every town and village when these sons of India take back their new visions, their changed ideals and modern programmes. Every reform movement in the land, whether social, political, or religious has received overwhelming impetus. . . . India's tutelage of a century and a half by Britain followed by four swift years of enlightenment by her contact with the world, usher in the new epoch for which God has been preparing her. . . . The developments now taking place are probably of greater significance to the Christian Church than those in any other land.

In the same connection Bishop Warne wrote to the Board of Foreign Missions concerning those who had returned from the War, "In our opinion they and their relatives will be more willing to receive the Gospel message."²

It was not till some years later, when Christian leaders were proclaiming the adoption of Christianity as the way to World Peace, that non-Christian Indians pointed to the World War as the Great Failure of Christianity. Certainly, the War was not an unmixed blessing to the cause of Christian Missions.

¹MCC, 1920, pp. 50 f.

²RBFM, 1918, p. 33.

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The Episcopal Address to the General Conference of 1920 stated that,

Whatever affects the people of a land affects likewise the work of the missionary, and because of the war and famine and pestilence with all their concomitants the obstacles to our progress have been more obvious and more persistent than during any like period in the past history of the field.¹

Famine conditions were existent in some portion of India during the whole of the period from 1906 till 1920. The District Superintendents' Reports for 1908 mention the prevalence of famine in many sections of the country, and the Episcopal Address of the same year noted that the famine had "caused people to wander from their homes. The labour of years, so far as outward organization goes, is often destroyed in one stroke."² The Central Conference that year authorized special collections for famine relief, and ordered the revival or continuance of Famine Relief Committees in the Central and Annual Conferences.³

The year 1918 witnessed, in addition to famine, the outbreak of plague and influenza. It is reported that more than six millions died in India alone as a result of the latter. The North-west India Conference reported that the great number of deaths had created the tremendous problem of caring for orphans and dependents. During the quadrennium which closed in 1919 this Conference alone reported 32,195 deaths among the Methodist Church membership. The Bombay Conference was ravaged by plague and influenza during 1917 and 1918, and hundreds of enrolled enquirers were carried off, while the membership death roll was nearly 8 per cent of the entire membership. During the quadrennium 1915-1919 the Bombay Conference lost 4,145 of its membership through death, the North India Conference 11,652, and the South India Conference 6,002, while the loss in the whole Church in India and Burma was 53,233. During the preceding four years the death roll had been only 26,340. War,

¹*JGC*, 1920, p. 969,

²*MCC*, 1908, p. 59.

³*Ibid.*, p. 85.

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famine, plague, influenza, political unrest—all served to make the period between 1906 and 1920 the most distracted in the whole history of the Methodist Episcopal Church. That the work did not suffer larger interruption, indeed, that there was real progress all along the line, can be accounted for largely by the fact that Methodists were still at work in the Mass-Movement areas, where these significant incidents in the life of India were least effective.¹

4. The Centenary Movement

The year 1920 marked the effective beginning of the Centenary Movement in India. At the session of the General Missionary Committee in 1915 it had been,

Resolved 1. That the General Committee memorialize the General Conference of 1916 to authorize the proper celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Resolved 2. That two years be set apart for this purpose, beginning January 1, 1918.

It was also proposed that the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, and other Boards of the Church be invited to co-operate, and that the Centenary Celebration be made a Church-wide movement.² The General Conference approved the suggestion, and the necessary committees were set up. It was proposed to make the financial goal of the Centenary \$80,000,000 to be secured over a five-year period. A number of missionaries were called from India to assist in the cultivation programme, and an enormous amount of literature was prepared. For several years the Centenary Movement was undoubtedly the most prominent topic in Episcopal Methodism. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had also joined in the Movement and added her strength in making the celebration Church-wide. The magnitude of the Movement can be seen in the fact that the Joint Committee reported the expenses of the Centenary to have been \$50,000 a

¹*RBFM*, 1908, pp. 64, 108; *MCC*, 1920, p. 180.

²*RBFM*, 1915, pp. 18 f.

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month from January 1 to May 1, 1918, \$100,000 a month from May 1 to November 1, and estimated that between November 1 and July 1, 1919, the expense would be at least \$200,000 a month.¹

Other American denominations became interested in the Movement, and in the *Indian Witness* of March 15, 1919, Dr. B. T. Badley announced that the Centenary had led to an "Inter-Church World Movement" in which a number of Church Boards were co-operating. A joint committee of all co-operating Boards directed the united effort, which included a united budget, a united treasury, united appeals and propaganda. The financial goal set for the "Inter-Church World Movement" was \$500,000,000 to be secured in five years.

It is interesting to note that the Corresponding Secretaries of the Board of Foreign Missions, in 1918, gave a warning which became a prophecy of what actually occurred: "It will be disastrous to the very future of our denominational life if, having been summoned to a great task, we should in a burst of temporary enthusiasm pour money into the treasuries of our boards, and then settle back in the old ways." The facts proved to be that Methodists poured pledges "into the treasuries of the boards," and then settled back "into the old ways" leaving many of them unpaid, resulting in enormous debts in America and on the mission fields. But that is a story for a later chapter.

The *Indian Witness* printed numerous reports and articles concerning the Centenary during the years 1918-1919. But the editor was not satisfied with the material being presented, for it dealt almost entirely with the Centenary in America. In a leading editorial on May 21, 1919, he proposed to take a hand in preparing Centenary material which would be indigenous. Centenary victories in India would be reported, rather than those in America. From this date every issue of the *Witness* contained one or more special pages devoted to the Centenary Movement. The "Objectives" of India's Centenary were announced on October 15 by B. T. Badley, who had been appointed Executive Secretary. The outline of the organization, membership of the committees, and

¹ *RBFM*, 1918, p. 14.

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methods of procedure were also contained in the same issue.¹ Until this date the Executive Board had acted as the Centenary Committee for India, but a new Commission was organized and held its first meeting on October 8, 1919. The quota of the Centenary to be raised in India during five years was set at \$310,292. The Executive Committee of the Commission met in Lucknow on November 18, and made many important decisions for the Campaign for 1920. With this meeting the Centenary Movement in India Methodism may be said to have been fairly launched. The Central Conference, meeting a few weeks later, gave its approval to the plans initiated.²

5. Mass Movements

The mass movement continued unabated during the period from 1906 to 1920. In an editorial on August 8, 1907, the *Indian Witness* urged that greater attention be given to the mass movement work. It approved of the Methodist system of baptizing a convert when convinced of his sincerity of purpose and placing him on probationary membership. The same magazine, on January 9, 1908, printed an article by Dr. Whitehead, Bishop of Madras, in which the writer urged his own church to undertake more active work among out-caste and aborigines. Editorially the *Witness* commented on this suggestion of the Bishop of Madras that the Anglican Church should make a change in its missionary policy. It agreed with the Bishop that opening the doors of the church to low-caste people had not hindered but had helped work among the high-castes.

In 1908 a new mass movement began in the Vikarabad circuit of the Hyderabad District.³ This movement spread rapidly and in October, 1909, the District Superintendent reported that there

¹*Minutes of the Executive Board of the M. E. Church in Southern Asia* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1919), pp. 22-28. Cited hereafter as *MEB*.

²*Indian Witness*, March 5, May 21, June 4, October 15, November 14, December 3, 1919; *MCC*, 1920, p. 29. Space does not permit a more detailed consideration of the aims and progress of the Centenary Movement in the United States and in India. The reader is referred to current issues of the *Christian Advocate* and of the *Indian Witness*.

³C. E. Parker, *A Challenge*, pp. 12-16.

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had been 2,956 baptisms in his district during the previous year. There might have been a larger number of baptisms except for the fact that it had been decided to put emphasis upon the training of new converts rather than seeking for more baptisms. He had adopted the policy of not entering new villages but of concentrating on villages where workers already lived.¹

At each meeting of the Central Conference the Committee on the State of the Church gave careful attention to the problems of the mass movement. The bishops also always included a section on mass movement work in their Episcopal Address. In 1912 they stated that,

One outstanding question is this, should we as a mission, with our limited forces, to meet present opportunities, lessen our forces in fields at present comparatively unfruitful and concentrate our forces where great harvests are being lost for lack of labourers? This situation furnishes a problem worthy of our most profound consideration and careful deliberation.²

In 1914 the Board of Foreign Missions joined with the bishops in India in creating a Mass Movement Commission to study the situation and to make plans to meet it. A year later the Commission reported that there were nine districts in particular in which mass movements prevailed in intensity: Bulandshahr, Delhi, Meerut, Muttra, Punjab, Roorkee, Tirhut, Vikarabad, and Raichur-Gulbarga.³ In 1917 the Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions reported that the India Mass Movement Commission had been organized in America with the Reverend Fred B. Fisher as Executive Secretary. This Commission had been in co-operation with the Commission in India. It was planned that the program of promotion and cultivation for mass movement work should be a part of the Centenary Movement. The aim was to secure \$200,000 a year for five years.⁴

The Mass Movement Commission of the Central Conference of Southern Asia carried on an active programme from the date of

¹*RBFM*, 1909.

²*MCC*, 1912, p. 41.

³*RBFM*, 1915, p. 23.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1917, p. 17.

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its formation. In 1920 it reported to the Central Conference that,

The Commission from the beginning has sought to do two things,—First, to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experience on the part of those engaged in Mass Movement work, and Second, to secure and distribute funds for the establishing and maintaining of Evangelistic Training Schools, the enlarging of our force of pastor-teachers and the multiplying of our Village Day Schools. During the quadrennium a large amount has been received from various sources for these purposes.¹

The accessions in Church membership as a result of the mass movements were extremely large during this period. In the quadrennium which closed in 1916 alone there were 140,000 baptisms in the mass movement areas. The Church membership was practically doubled during the years between 1906 and 1920. In the former year the total Christian community was reported as being slightly larger than 184,000, while at the close of this period it numbered more than 360,000.²

6. Movements toward Church Union

Active interest in the question of Church Union was aroused as a result of an action relating to that subject taken by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India at its Indore meeting in 1907. The Assembly issued an invitation to other Churches and Missions in India to appoint committees to consider the question of Church Union. The *Indian Witness* of February 14 commented favorably on this action. In the next issue there appeared an editorial, "That They May Be One," in which five points of Church polity common to the larger denominations were discussed. Since all denominations including the Methodist are more or less agreed on these, "there are no hindrances to union which cannot be overcome either in a working theology or polity." In its issue of March 14 the *Witness* proposed editorially six principles on which Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists could unite. If they could

¹*MCC*, 1920, pp. 83 f.

²*RBFM*, 1907, p. 487; *MCC*, 1920, p. 180.

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agree on these principles union would not be impossible. On April 4 the Reverend G. H. Rouse of the Baptist Mission, Calcutta, is quoted as saying that the Methodist Episcopal polity well combines the three systems of Church organization, namely, Presbyterian, Congregational and Episcopal. In the Methodist Episcopal Church it had been found possible to combine all three ecclesiastical systems in one body. The *Dnyanodaya* adopted much the same point of view.

1. Some of the denominations in India felt that the Methodist Episcopal Church was not as cordial to Church Union as she should be. Dr. J. P. Jones of Madura, in writing to the *Congregationalist*, complimented the Methodist Church for its achievements, but expressed regret that she was not doing more to develop co-operation with other denominations. The *Kaukab-i-Hind* commented editorially on this article and said:

Methodist organization and polity are such as will make it very difficult for us to unite with other bodies on any satisfactory basis.....Those who have carefully thought the matter out are of the opinion that while a loose federation of interests could be accomplished, anything like union would not be accomplished between our Church without one of the parties practically giving up everything that it holds as essential to the success of Church government.¹

In all of the discussions of Church Union two factors in the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India made it difficult for this body to have anything but academic interests in the matter. First of all was the fact that there was no separation of Church and Mission in its organization. While it was possible for the Presbyterians to propose union between the various Churches which were separate from Missions, the Missions themselves retaining their ties with the Churches in America or Europe, such was not possible for the Methodist Episcopal Church. The leaders of this Church could see no possible way of entering into Church Union without breaking connectional relationships, and this they did not care to do. The second factor grew out of the first, namely that the Methodist Church in India was not free to

¹*Indian Witness*, September 5, 1907.

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make decisions in such matters as this independently of the General Conference of America. These facts explain the seeming reluctance of the Methodists to discuss Church Union.

Although the Methodists had prided themselves since 1864 that they had solved the Church-Mission problem, nevertheless, in actuality there was often this duality. An example was given in an article by J. H. Messmore in the *Witness* of October 17, 1907. A Local Elder was tried on a charge of immorality by the District Conference, the proper Church court, and found innocent, but the District Superintendent in his capacity as agent of the Missionary Society dismissed the accused from Mission service because he was convinced of the man's guilt.

With the exception of those who are members of an Annual Conference, all Mission employees are in the hands of the superintendents of the Districts. The superintendent cannot touch them ecclesiastically but can employ or dismiss them at his own pleasure.

Thus in the Church there is an official who exercises two functions: he administers the purely ecclesiastical affairs of the District according to the laws of the Church, and he directs the work of the Mission according to the rules of the Missionary Society. This distinction has probably been more apparent to those outside the Methodist Church than to its own leaders.

The official statement of the relationship of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the whole problem of Church Union is well stated in the Episcopal Address of 1908:

As a people we stand, as we have always stood, for the closest Christian fellowship with all followers of our Lord; for the closest of fraternal relations with our fellow-believers of every name. . . . It may be true, and doubtless is true, as some remind us, that we as a Church have not been forward in advocating organic union of the Churches. It should be pointed out, however, that *our* relations to this question, by a variety of considerations, are more complicated than that of other Churches which more earnestly urge union. Our missionary operations are not confined, like those of sister Churches that might be named, to one, two, or even three, of the presidencies and provinces of the Indian Empire. In the providence of God we have been thrust out into all parts of the Indian Empire, not to speak of other lands,

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among peoples of many languages, in several of the feudatory States, as well as in British territory. For years to come it is evident that we must of necessity be largely engaged in strengthening and solidifying this widespread work, in assimilating the heterogeneous multitude of converts God has given us, and in developing a true and worthy type of spiritual life among them; a task sufficient to absorb all our energies and tax to the utmost all our powers and resources. As a matter of philosophic necessity union cannot possibly appeal to us at this stage of our development as powerfully as it must to smaller and more compact Christian bodies, or to Churches restricted to comparatively narrow areas of operation.

We must remind ourselves, too, that the questions connected with the relation of the Mission to the Church, and of Missions and Churches to the Home Churches and Boards, are neither few nor unimportant, especially in view of the financial dependence of the work in these lands upon Western benevolence. In our case, these questions bristle with difficulties, and in themselves are of such a character as to compel us to move slowly, no matter how ardent in the pursuit of organic union we might otherwise choose to be.

But while organic *union*, so far as the Methodist Episcopal Church is concerned, appears to be somewhat distant, is there not ample scope and inviting opportunity for Church *federation* on some practical co-operative basis? And may there not be inaugurated a wider and a closer co-operation in various lines of missionary activity, for instance, maintenance of hospitals, high schools, work of publication, training and industrial institutions, and schools of theology? In this direction, we are persuaded, lies the most practical speedy realization of the praiseworthy desire for union among the great Churches that differ as widely in Church order and methods of operation. And with this should go an inflexible purpose on the part of us all, strenuously to avoid wasteful overlapping and everything that bears even the semblance of unholy rivalry. For our part, we are determined to continue to cultivate the most fraternal relations with our fellow-workers of every Church, to avoid all possible causes of irritation, and as much as in us lieth to live peaceably with all who work in the work of the Lord, even as we also do.¹

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on the State of the Church, the Central Conference of 1908 took action in accordance with the spirit of the Episcopal Address. The peculiar nature of the Methodist Episcopal Church made it impossible to

¹ MCC, 1908, pp. 52 f. *passim*.

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consider union with other bodies in India, nevertheless, an early federation of all the Christian forces on the field was desirable. A Committee was appointed to confer with Committees of other bodies to consider the whole subject, "with instruction to seek an early practical federation of the Christian forces in India, and the greatest possible measure of joint and common action in schools, literature and other matters of common interest."¹

2. As early as 1909 it became apparent to the promoters of Church Union that the only possible basis of co-operation was some form of federation. As a consequence, the Reverend W. A. Wilson, an ardent advocate of Church Union, submitted to the *Indian Witness* of February 4 a "Statement of Principles for Church Union" which enumerated twelve points, obviously relating to federation rather than union. On March 10, 1909, a conference was held in Jubbulpore for the purpose of drawing up a proposed constitution for "The Federation of Christian Churches in India." The results of this meeting were reported in the *Witness* of May 13. Seven Churches or Missions were represented. A Preamble and Constitution were drawn up. The latter contained six articles, stating the name, basis of membership, purpose and means of realizing this purpose. The federation was not to interfere with the creed, internal order, or external relations of any of the federating societies or churches. For the realization of the objects of the federation, there would be Provincial Federal Councils and a National Federal Council. All Churches or Missions were invited to subscribe to this basis of federation.

The *Indian Methodist Times*, representing Wesleyan Methodism in North India, proposed in 1911 a closer co-operation between the various branches of the Methodist Church in India. Such co-operation might lead to a federated if not a united Methodist Church in India. This proposal aroused sympathetic interest at a meeting of the District Superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Jubbulpore in March of that year. Bishops Warne and Robinson were asked to write a letter to the *Times* welcom-

¹ MCC, 1908, p. 63.

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ing the suggestion. Should the authorities of Wesleyan Methodism approve, they proposed a meeting of an equal number of representatives from the two bodies.¹

In July, 1911, a call was issued for a second conference on Church Federation to meet in Jubbulpore, August 9, 1911. A report of this conference appeared in the *Witness* of August 22. In deference to the wishes of the Anglican and Baptist Churches that portion of the Constitution which related to the basis of federation adopted at the first Jubbulpore meeting was altered. It had been agreed at first that all the federating bodies would recognize the ministry and sacraments and would receive into membership full members in good standing of all other Churches in the federation. But the Anglicans and Baptists were unable to accept this basis of federation, and in the hope of securing their co-operation the second Jubbulpore Conference reluctantly omitted the clauses relating to the recognition of the ministry and sacraments of other Churches and made the provision that members of other Churches would be received into "fellowship" though not into membership. This action created quite a stir among Church leaders in India and the pages of the *Witness* for the next several months were filled with articles on the subject. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India was not happy with the modification proposed, nor was the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the session of the Central Conference in 1912 this body stated that it would welcome any movement which would bring the Churches of the evangelical communions into a closer fellowship of co-operation in Christian service. For this reason the articles of Union proposed at the first Jubbulpore Conference were considered a more practical basis of federation than the modified form presented by the second conference.

About this time Dr. John R. Mott visited India with the result that there were organized several provincial missionary councils with all of their work harmonized by means of a National Missionary Council. The purpose of these Councils was to co-ordinate the activities of the various missionary bodies at work

¹ *Indian Witness* April 4, 1911.

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in India. The Methodist Episcopal Church enthusiastically appointed its delegates to the various councils. The formation of the National Missionary Council removed to a large extent the interest which had existed in Church Union. It was not till 1915, therefore, that the Reverend W. A. Wilson reported in the *Indian Witness* that the Executive Committee of the "Federation" had revised the Constitution so as to provide for the interchange of membership between Churches.

When the Central Conference met in 1916 it "accepted cordially" the basis of federation proposed and appointed a committee which should investigate whether "a yet closer federation with the Presbyterian Church in India" was not possible.¹

Though the United Church of North India had been formed previous to 1920, the Methodist Episcopal Church had not found itself in a position to enter that union. Her leaders still preferred to look forward to some type of federation into which Indian Methodism might enter without severing her ties with the Church in America. In harmony with this desire the Episcopal Address in 1920 stated that,

Our Executive Board, on behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India and Burma, has subscribed to the Statement on Comity submitted by the National Missionary Council.

We, however, stand ready to go much further with any Church or Mission that will grant us reciprocal treatment in federation and co-operation, than that for which this document provides. We are prepared to do this in the exchange of pulpits, in the transfer of communicants, in communing with those of other Churches, in the recognition of others, and in all other possible brotherly ways.

In addition to all the foregoing helpful co-operation, we hold ourselves ready to sympathetically and prayerfully enter-

¹MCC, 1916, p. 72. The basis of federation was to the effect that "The Federation shall not interfere with the existing creed of any Church or Society entering into its fellowship, or with its internal order or external relations. But in accepting the principle that the Church of God is one, and that believers are the body of Christ and severally members thereof, the Federating Churches agree to respect each other's discipline, to recognize each other's ministry, and to acknowledge each other's membership by a free interchange of full members in good and regular standing duly accredited, welcoming them into Christian fellowship and communion as brethren in Christ" (*Ibid.*, p. 100.)

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tain any proposals for a United Church in India, that has deeper purpose than mere uniformity; that is not biased by tradition, and that is so Scriptural and spiritual as would bring about such a vital union as that for which our Lord prayed.¹

During the brief years between 1906 and 1920 a number of significant movements had taken place in India and in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The period opened with the celebration of the Anniversary of fifty years of missionary activity. The Jubilee provoked a widespread revival movement which profoundly affected the life of the Church. During these same years India was in the throes of a remarkable Nationalist awakening which had its repercussions in the life of the Christian Church. Efforts at Church Union and co-operation drew the Christian bodies in India closer together. The influence of these several movements is to be seen clearly in organizational and administrative developments in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.

¹*MCC*, 1920, pp. 46 f.; *MEB*, 1917, pp. 22-31.

CHAPTER V

Resultant Developments in Organization and Administration 1906-1920

1. Annual Conferences and the English Mission

THE fourth period of India Methodist history did not witness any extensive organizational developments in the matter of Annual Conferences.

1. The Central Provinces Mission Conference had been organized in January, 1905. The Central Conference, in 1912, petitioned the General Conference of that year to grant an Enabling Act whereby the Central Provinces Mission Conference might become an Annual Conference. Permission was given, and the Conference was organized by Bishop J. W. Robinson on February 27, 1913, in Jubbulpore.¹

The Malaysia Conference desired to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Central Conference of Southern Asia. The Central Conference of 1912 approved, and requested the General Conference to give permission for such an action; but although the General Conference consented, nothing was done about the matter during the quadrennium. The Central Conference, in 1916, petitioned the General Conference to renew its action of 1912 constituting the Malaysia and Philippine Islands Annual Conferences a separate field to be known as South-eastern Asia, and to assign to the Episcopal administration of that field the bishops designated thereto at the last General Conference. Again nothing transpired, and the bishops of Southern Asia reported to the General Conference of 1920 that "the South-eastern division of the field, including the Malaysia, the Netherlands Indies and the Philippine Islands Conferences, once again memorialize that they be set off

¹MCC, 1912, p. 86; *Ibid.*, 1916, p. 46.

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into a separate Episcopal area, with a Bishop resident at Manila and also at Singapore.”¹

In 1916 the Central Conference petitioned the General Conference to grant an enabling act whereby the Bombay Annual Conference might be divided into two Annual Conferences. No action was taken on this during the quadrennium, and at the Central Conference of 1920 the Committee on Boundaries reported as follows:

Sec. V.—We memorialize the General Conference to pass an Enabling Act, permitting the North and the Northwest India Conferences so to divide their territories and adjust their boundaries as to form three Annual Conferences and a Mission Conference of the existing two, in accordance with the request of both conferences concerned.

Section VI.—In accordance with the request of the Bombay and Central Provinces Conferences, we petition General Conference for an Enabling Act whereby, during the next quadrennium, three Annual Conferences may be created in place of the present two, with such boundaries and names as may be adopted.

Sec. VII.—In accordance with the request of the Northwest India Conference that the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan territories be grouped together so as to form a separate Conference, we petition General Conference to pass an Enabling Act, providing for the formation of a Mission Conference to include the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan.²

In their Report to the General Conference of 1920 the bishops of Southern Asia gave several reasons for the petitions submitted by the Central Conference of India:

The very large territory covered by some of our Conferences, the difficulties of travel and the diversity of tongues spoken, with the inevitable confusion and delay in the work of their annual sessions, leads us to ask Enabling Acts looking to the formation of four additional Annual and three Mission Conferences. If added explanation is needed to justify these requests we point out that up to the present our unit of work has been the District rather than the Annual Conference.

¹*MCC*, 1912, p. 86; 1916, p. 118, *JGC*, 1920, p. 988.

²*MCC*, 1920, p. 107. See also, *Minutes* of the North India, Northwest India, Bombay, and Central Provinces Annual Conferences for 1919.

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The scarcity in the early days of men with educational qualifications sufficient to justify Annual Conference membership led us to a very large use of local preachers and exhorters. The fact that the District Conference was born in India, and that in the Southern Asia field we now have sixty-four of these organizations with membership ranging from fifty to two hundred and fifty, shows the extent to which this arm of our service has been organized. However, changing conditions made advisable a change of plan. Educated young men in increasing numbers are asking for and are worthy of Annual Conference membership. To this add the fact that in the era of intensive work on which we are now entering the smaller Conference area in which there are a comparatively smaller number of districts furnishes by far the most convenient unit for close supervision and cultivation, and you have the reasons for these requests.¹

With the sanction of the General Conference the Gujarat and the Lucknow Annual Conferences and the Indus River Mission Conference were organized during the next quadrennium.

2. In 1907 there appeared an editorial in the *Indian Witness* which resulted in a considerable amount of discussion and correspondence. Under the title, "A Question of Policy for the Methodist Episcopal Church," the writer pointed out that the policy of the Missionary Society had been to discourage work among the English-speaking people in India. But Methodist missionaries, notably Taylor, Thoburn and Warne, had been providentially led into this work, and other Missions complimented the Methodist upon the success among English-speaking people. There should now be a change of policy on the part of the Missionary Society, and approval and support should be given to English work.² A contributor, calling himself "A Missionary," disagreed with the emphasis of the editorial, and believed that the English work should be subsidiary from the main effort of the Church in India. Too large a part of the missionary force was already employed in this field. He did not believe that all of the work undertaken among English speaking people had been through providential guidance. Where wrong methods lead to change of policy, it is

¹JGC, 1920, p, 987.

²*Indian Witness*, April 11, 1907.

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hardly fair to accuse Providence of pointing a way to other lines of effort. All English work should not be abandoned, but a policy should be adopted for the coming years which put greater emphasis on the evangelization of India.¹

In the issue of July 4, 1907, Dr. Harvey Reeves Calkins proposed that "the Central Conference define a policy that should guide in the days to come, and let the Church at home take knowledge of our expectation." In line with this suggestion a memorial was presented to the Central Conference of 1912, which proposed that the English-speaking churches be organised into a Mission Conference somewhat after the manner of the early South India Conference. The proposition was received with mixed feelings. Not all the English people favored it, and the missionaries were uncertain. But there was no opposition from those engaged in vernacular work. The Central Conference, however, requested the General Conference to pass an enabling act whereby the Central Conference might organize the English-speaking work in India into a Mission. This petition was granted, but no action was taken during the next quadrennium. The Central Conference of 1916 memorialized the General Conference that, "The Executive Board of the Central Conference with the majority vote of the Conference and the consent of the Bishops concerned may organize the English-speaking work in India into a Mission or Conference." This request also was granted. But when in 1919 the Executive Board undertook to give effect to this legislation several difficulties were encountered. One Annual Conference had not given a majority vote in favor of the plan. Ministers and churches were uncertain as to their relations to those Annual Conferences within whose bounds they were located. The administration of the large educational interest of the Church created enormous problems. The whole matter was therefore postponed until the meeting of the Executive Board at the time of the next Central Conference.²

¹*Indian Witness*, May 9, 1907.

²MCC, 1912, p. 93, JGC, 1912, p. 619; MCC, 1916, p. 125; *Indian Witness*, April 16, October 29, 1919; MEB, 1919, pp. 15, 30.

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The Committee on English Work recommended to the Central Conference of 1920 that the Executive Board be empowered to organize the English Mission, that ministers and missionaries retain their membership in and make their reports to their respective Annual Conferences, and that the control of all English Institutions remain under the control of the Conferences which then elected their Boards until such time as the Conference and English Mission should decide that the control be transferred to the English Mission.¹

2. Central Conference and Executive Board

1. The period from 1906 to 1920 witnessed the delegation of larger powers to the Central Conference of Southern Asia by the General Conference. The Conference of 1908 requested, and received, authority to fix the residences of the Missionary Bishops for Southern Asia.² The Conference of 1912, accordingly, fixed Lucknow, Bombay, and Singapore as Episcopal residences, and voted that should another bishop be elected Calcutta be the fourth place of residence.³ In 1916 further extension of power was requested so that the Central Conference might fix the residences and assign the Missionary Bishops to such residences.⁴ In 1920 the Conference memorialized the Central Conference,

To grant to India and Burma either a Regional Conference, as contemplated under the scheme of reorganization and union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, or to grant to the Central Conference of Southern Asia additional powers as follows:—

(1) The right to elect Bishops for its territory, either from its own field or from the Church at large, subject to confirmation by the General Conference.

(2) The power to determine matters of polity pertaining to its own territory not in conflict with the discipline or rulings of the General Conference.

¹MCC, 1920, p. 115.

²*Ibid.*, 1908, p. 62; *JGC*, 1908, p. 458.

³MCC, 1912, p. 52.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1916, p. 118.

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In addressing the General Conference on behalf of this memorial the bishops of Southern Asia pointed out that there was no thought of separation from the mother organization or any request for abatement of responsibility or the relinquishment of essential rights. The request seemed but the natural development essential for the establishment of a world-wide Methodist Episcopal Church. Such authority would permit the adaptation of Methodism to the life and thought and ideals of the mighty Indian Empire. The India Conferences would of course accept a modified representation in the General Conference, but would want the privilege either of nominating to the General Conference the men whom they desire for Bishops or of electing them subject to ratification by the General Conference.¹

While the privilege of electing bishops for India was not granted in 1920, the powers of the Central Conference were further extended. It was now enacted that, with certain restrictions, the Central Conference should have supervision of the educational, industrial, publishing, medical and other connectional interests of the Conferences within its jurisdiction; it should have power to arrange Courses of Study for all its ministry and all its workers, ordained or lay; it should supervise the missionary work and policy of the indigenous Church and provide suitable organization for such work; it should have the power to prepare and translate simplified forms of the Ritual, to make such adaptations regarding membership, special advices, worship and local ministry as the peculiar conditions of the field demand, to incorporate in accordance with the laws of the land an Executive Board for the purpose of transacting interim business, to establish rules, rites, and ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage, and to make rules and regulations for the purchase and control of property.²

In many respects the Methodist Episcopal Church in India with its Central Conference had now become largely an autonomous body. It did not yet have the right to select its own chief supervisor, the bishop, to determine finally the distribution of the

¹*MCC*, 1920, p. 77; *JGC*, 1920, pp. 987 f.

²*JGC*, 1920, pp. 600-602.

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funds secured from America, nor to enter into negotiations with other bodies leading to Church Union, but larger powers had been granted by the General Conference than many in India had dared to hope for. The Central Conference had assumed larger and larger importance, and in 1920 appointed nine Boards, eighteen Commissions, and sixteen Standing Committees. There is little wonder that many both in India and America should come to look upon this body as the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.

That the spirit of Nationalism was entering in the leadership of Indian Methodism is indicated by the fact that a group of Indian delegates attending the General Conference of 1920 presented a memorial requesting that the basis of membership in the Central Conference be revised so as to permit larger representations of Nationals. This request was a natural one, for although the membership in the Annual Conferences was now predominantly National, those who represented these Conferences at the 1920 session of the Central Conference were largely foreign. The memorial received sympathetic consideration, and was referred to the Corresponding Secretaries of the Board of Foreign Missions and the Bishops of Southern Asia with the instruction that a report and recommendations be made in 1924.¹

The Central Conference which met in Lucknow in 1920 is significant in that it authorized the establishment of a new organization—the Board of Home and Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia. In the course of a devotional service on Sunday, January 25, nine young Indian men offered themselves for foreign missionary service, suggesting Mesopotamia as a possible field. In order to care for the indigenous missionary interests of the Church a Board was organized and a Constitution adopted for Home and Foreign Missions.²

2. During the period from 1906 till 1920 larger authority and responsibility were given to the Executive Board of the

¹*MCC*, p. 605.

²*JGC*, 1920, pp. 164, 170.

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Central Conference. Meeting annually, a large number of matters within the province of the Central Conference were delegated to it, and at the close of 1919 it appointed three commissions, eight committees and one board. Its agenda included action on a number of important matters, including the disposition of the Bishop Thoburn Special Fund, Famine Relief Funds, and Mass Movement Funds, the supervision of the Centenary Campaign for two years until a permanent Commission could be set up, the adoption of the Rules of Comity proposed by the National Missionary Council, the reorganization of the Conference Finance Committees, the direction of the program of Aggressive Evangelism and the Mass Movement program, the direction of the Publication interests, the consideration of Conference boundaries, the organization of the English Mission, the supervision of work among Educated Non-Christians, the establishment of a language school for missionaries, and the consideration of numerous property and financial matters.¹ Composed, in 1919, of only twenty-six members (none of whom were Nationals), this body exerted extraordinary powers in determining the policies of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India. Judged from the point of view of its Executive Board the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia in 1919 lacked much that was desirable in the matter of indigenous leadership.

3. Episcopal Supervision

1. In 1906 the Methodist Episcopal Church in India was under the joint supervision of the Missionary Bishops and the General Superintendents of the Church. The Board of Bishops quadrennially appointed one of their number to visit and inspect the work in India and to preside conjointly with a Missionary Bishop. In this capacity Bishop Fitz-Gerald came to India in 1906. He did his work well, but the strain of such a visit was too great for a senior bishop, and he never returned to take up his duties in America. His death occurred on April 5, 1907, in Hong Kong. The news of his death shocked the Church in America and in

¹MEB, 1919.

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India, and raised afresh the question of the advisability of sending one of the General Superintendents to the mission field. An editorial in the *Witness* called the plan "almost the worst possible system" and urged that the provision for the brief quadrennial visit be abandoned by General Conference. If the Church still felt that there was need of the representation of the mission fields by an official of the American churches, let the General Conference either assign a General Superintendent to each field in addition to the Missionary Bishops or increase the number of Missionary Secretaries so that the contacts between the foreign field and the American churches might be kept up.¹

The Central Conference, meeting in 1908, expressed its satisfaction with the Missionary Episcopacy and earnestly requested that this plan of supervision be not changed. But in view of the heavy physical and mental strain of the quadrennial visits the Conference strongly urged that one of the younger bishops be sent hereafter. This recommendation was repeated in 1912 and 1916.²

Leaders of the Church in America were still dissatisfied with the plan of the Missionary Episcopacy and the quadrennial visits of American bishops. A resolution was presented to but rejected by the General Conference of 1908 that all Missionary Bishops be elected General Superintendents.³ The *Michigan Christian Advocate* had no sympathy with the quadrennial visits of bishops to India and Africa, and said editorially:

Our Missionary Bishops are trustworthy men and they ought to be able to keep the Church advised as to the status of our work. It would be better to establish regular episcopal residences in those countries and allow the incumbents to become acclimated than to compel these extra trips simply for supplementary supervision.⁴

The *Zion's Herald* also expressed dissatisfaction, and reported that "throughout the Church, taking it by and large, there is a growing

¹*Indian Witness*, June 6, 1907.

²*MCC*, 1908, p. 62; 1912, p. 52; 1916, p. 63.

³*JGC*, 1908, p. 203.

⁴*Indian Witness*, March 7, 1911.

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and insistent demand for some change in our method of Episcopal supervision.”¹ Bishop McDowell, who made the quadrennial visit in 1910-1911, expressed himself on the subject without reserve. Before more than one of the India Conferences he said that he considered it to be “a piece of administrative foolishness” to send General Superintendents to fields administered by Missionary Bishops.²

The *Indian Witness* again took up the fight, and in its issue of May 16, 1911, after quoting from the official minutes of all the Annual Conferences in India expressing approval of the Missionary Bishops, comments, “When those leaders are so evidently efficient, is there any valid reason for the maintenance of the quadrennial visits?” Bishop Oldham, however, disagreed with the editor of the *Witness*, and in an article in the *Pittsburgh Advocate* approved of the visits of the bishops from America, for they helped the missionary bishops “see themselves as others saw them.”³

The Central Conference of 1912 memorialized the General Conference to elect one more missionary bishop for Southern Asia, to make no change in the policy which placed Indian Conferences under the supervision of missionary bishops, and to enact legislation which would permit the missionary bishops to receive their support from the Episcopal fund rather than from the Board of Foreign Missions. All of these requests were granted, and Reverend John Wesley Robinson was elected a Missionary Bishop for Southern Asia.⁴ Upon the election of Bishop Oldham as one of the Corresponding Secretaries of the Board of Foreign Missions, the General Conference elected Dr. William P. Eveland a Missionary Bishop. He was assigned to the Philippines and Malaysia. During the cold season of 1914-1915 Bishop J. W. Hamilton was expected to make the quadrennial visit of supervision and inspection, but due to the unsettled con-

¹*Indian Witness*, June 7, 1911.

²*Ibid.*, May 16, 1911.

³*Ibid.*, May 23, 1911.

⁴*MCC*, 1912, pp. 52, 88, *JGC*, 1912, pp. 466, 533, 688.

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ditions growing out of the war no visit was made during the quadrennium.

At its session in 1916 the Central Conference again requested that India Methodism remain under the supervision of Missionary Bishops. The Executive Board was authorized to take action on matters pertaining to Episcopal residences and supervision which might arise between the sessions of the Central Conference. The Missionary Bishops were requested to spend more time in America cultivating the churches.¹

2. It was customary both in India and America just previous to the meetings of the Central and General Conferences to revive discussion of the Episcopal supervision of the mission fields. In 1919 the editorial policy of the *Indian Witness* had changed, probably representing a change in attitude on the part of a majority of its constituency, with regard to the Missionary Episcopacy. An editorial on September 24 favored the abolition of the Missionary Episcopacy, for it was not consistent with Methodist polity, and discriminated between different sections of the Church. "If a man is large enough to be a bishop in any place he is large enough to be a bishop anywhere." On October 2 an article appeared in the *Christian Advocate* from the pen of Dr. Joseph B. Hingeley, suggesting that Bishops Warne and J. W. Robinson be elected General Superintendents, with supervision over Southern Asia, and that a new Episcopal area be composed of Eastern Asia and the Philippines.²

But there were still staunch advocates of the Missionary Episcopacy, especially in India where the system had seemed to work so well. Previous to the meeting of the Central Conference the discussion of the subject was widespread in India Methodism. The point of view of those who favored the continuance of the Missionary Episcopacy was expressed at length in an article by Dr. B. T. Badley which appeared in the *Witness* of December 7, 1919. To ask for the General Superintendency for India would be to acknowledge a lack of leadership among those now at work in

¹MCC 1916, p. 63.

²*Indian Witness*, December 10, 1919.

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India, and admit that the Indian Church has no hope of developing leadership in the future. India Methodists would give up all voice in the election of their own leaders, for their delegates to General Conference have little chance of expressing their wishes before that body. The men elected would be unfamiliar with the problems of India, for General Superintendents must be elected for the Church at large and not for a specific section. The General Superintendency for India would close the door to the election of an Indian Bishop, for no Indian would be sufficiently well known to be elected. This would be a blow to the spirit of nationalism. The change would sacrifice good administration in India for the sake of better representation before the American churches. And furthermore, the missionary bishops in India were not desirous of more dignity and authority than they now possessed.

This article brought forth heated replies from two Indian Methodists, N. K. Mukerjee and Ganga Nath Shukul. The former argued that India should have the General Superintendency as China and all the other mission fields, with the exception of India and Africa, had. The best men in the Church should be elected to the Episcopacy, whether they were missionaries or not. Just as unfamiliarity with conditions in India was no handicap to the Viceroy, so it would not limit the usefulness of a General Superintendent sent from America. The argument that the new plan would not provide for continuous leadership was not valid, since Bishop Bashford had been able to give many years to China. There would be no legal barrier to the election of an Indian to the Episcopacy. The most serious objection to the Missionary Episcopacy was that it dishonored India, even though the missionary bishops felt no dishonor from the limitation of their powers. China and the other mission fields have bishops who rank in authority with the bishops in America. India Methodism should be under the supervision of similar bishops. And, finally, a bishop from America, being detached from personal interests, would be better able to see the weaknesses of the Indian Church and of the missionary body than a missionary bishop who had grown accustomed to the situation. Mr. Shukul followed the same line

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of argument, and also laid stress on the fact that the Missionary Episcopacy was of inferior rank.¹

Shortly after the General Conference in 1916 Bishop Eveland died suddenly while still in America. The burden of supervision had to be borne by Bishops Warne, J. E. and J. W. Robinson. Bishop Warne spent nearly twenty months of the quadrennium in America assisting with the Centenary Campaign. The Board of Bishops recognized the difficulties and sent to India for brief visits Bishops William Burt and Homer C. Stuntz. Both of these had had missionary experience, and their assistance was great. Bishop J. E. Robinson was expected to retire at the General Conference of 1920, therefore the Central Conference of that year requested General Conference to elect two additional Bishops for India and Burma, and two for the Eastern Asia area.² The bishops in India supported this request, pointing out that "the unprecedented development of the work, especially in the mass movement areas, the large building programme that will necessarily grow out of the success of the Centenary, and the delicate political situation that will naturally develop during the transition period leading to home rule" make it necessary to ask for increase in the number of bishops. "In the time of severe testing that is ahead we are convinced," they said, "that close and careful supervision is essential."³

3. It was probably not the fact that N. K. Mukerjee presented a resolution requesting the substitution of a General Superintendency for the Missionary Episcopacy in India which influenced General Conference so much as the fact that sentiment in America had become practically unanimous in favor of the change. Whatever the influence, the General Conference of 1920 adopted the resolution of its Committee on Episcopacy to the effect that,

1. The Missionary Episcopacy was designed to meet special conditions at a time when continuous supervision by the General Superintendents had not been extended to our foreign fields.

¹*Indian Witness*, December 24, 1919.

²*MCC*, 1920, p. 78.

³*JGC*, 1920, p. 988.

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2. While the achievements and successes of the Missionary Episcopacy have amply justified its institution, none the less it is the deliberate judgment of your Committee that the point of highest usefulness has been reached and that in the new era upon which we are now entering all our foreign fields should have the benefit of supervision by General Superintendents assigned to such fields.

3. This may be accomplished in either of the following ways:

- (1) By the retirement of the present Missionary Bishops.
- (2) By their election to the General Superintendency and assignment to their respective fields.

4. Your committee is of the opinion that all the interests of our World-wide Church and of the Kingdom of God will be best advanced by the adoption of the latter method, and so recommends.¹

In accordance with this provision F. W. Warne and J. W. Robinson were elected General Superintendents, and assigned to India.² In the general elections two additional General Superintendents were elected, and in fulfilment of the request of the Central Conference were assigned to Southern Asia. These were Bishops Frederick B. Fisher and H. Lester Smith.³ The assignment of the Bishops to the Episcopal residencies was as follows:

Bangalore Area: Bishop Smith—South India Conference, English Mission.

Bombay Area: Bishop Robinson—Bombay Conference, Central Provinces Conference.

Calcutta Area: Bishop Fisher—Bengal Conference, Burma Mission Conference.

Lucknow Area: Bishop Warne—North India Conference, Northwest India Conference.⁴

The long controversy had at last been concluded. The Missionary Episcopacy had been tried and put aside. The Methodist Episcopal Church in India was again brought under the super-

¹*JGC*, pp. 282, 455 f.

²*Ibid.*, p. 338.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 343, 361.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 462.

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vision of the General Superintendents. India Methodism's Episcopal honor had been restored! But the advocates of *Swaraj* in ecclesiastical government were soon to learn that Dr. B. T. Badley had spoken the truth when he wrote that it would be almost impossible for an Indian to be elected to the Episcopacy under the plan of General Superintendency. Ten years later, when the Central Conference of Southern Asia elected the first Indian bishop, he was not a General Superintendent of the Church as a whole. But during those ten years there had been a growing conviction that it was better to have an Indian Church possessing a large amount of self-control than to hold on to the doubtful honor of possessing the General Superintendency. The privilege to elect, consecrate, and largely support its own Bishops brought the Methodist Episcopal Church in India much nearer its ideal of being an indigenous Church—self-directing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.

4. Nationalism and Indigenous Leadership

1. Indian Methodism felt the influence of the Nationalist Movement in India and responded to a remarkable degree. But even before the demand for Indian leadership in political affairs became articulate the leaders of Methodism in India were conscious of the desire and need for raising up a strong body of indigenous leaders. The Nationalist Movement but accentuated their efforts. This purpose to place the control of the Church as rapidly as possible in the hands of capable Nationals is well reflected in the Episcopal Addresses delivered quadrennially to the members of the Central Conference. It is true that the statements in the Addresses express the ideal rather than the actuality, yet coming from the chosen leaders of the Church, who have travelled extensively throughout the connection, they are extremely significant. For this reason we make no excuse for quoting extensively from the utterances of the Bishops. No theme was more constantly stressed than the utmost importance of selecting the very best type of indigenous leadership for the Church.

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In speaking to the Central Conference in 1908 the Bishops said:

A prime necessity of all solid, substantial, symmetrical, missionary work is a steady unbroken supply of workers with the training that fits them for the prosecution of the work committed to them. Yet, how utterly has this been ignored in some of our Conferences! We have been all too willing in some places to drift along for many years in a happy-go-lucky, aimless way, content to depend upon stray misfits and discarded or undesirable workers from other missions. It really seems inexplicable that we should have been so indifferent to the need of proper provision for developing our own workers in the younger Conferences. The time has come for us to address ourselves earnestly to this urgent problem.¹

In 1912 the Bishops stated that,

There are about 35,000 of our Indian Christian Community under Indian District Superintendents, and in a number of large districts with fifteen or twenty thousand Christians there is not more than one missionary of the Board of Foreign Missions. The work of bringing in converts, shepherding the Christian community and generally developing the Indian Church is largely in the hands of our Indian ministry, and we greatly rejoice in their success.²

Concerning the Indigenous Ministry the Episcopal Address in 1916 informed the Central Conference that,

In the raising up of an indigenous ministry we are, in the various parts of the field, constrained by existing circumstances. The need for the highly-educated teacher and minister who can take his place by the side of the missionary, equal not only in ecclesiastical position and authority, but also in ability to bear responsibility and to bring things to pass, is keenly felt from border to border. This need has been felt from the beginning, but never so keenly as now.³

The message of the Bishops in 1920, however, gave the most extensive consideration to the subject of turning over control and responsibility to Nationals:

¹MCC, 1908, p. 41.

²*Ibid.*, 1912, p. 37.

³*Ibid.*, 1916, p. 49.

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This question has been prominently before the National Missionary Council since 1912, when the following resolution was passed:—"This Conference would emphasize the principle that the work carried on by foreign missionary societies would be gradually transferred, as opportunities offer, to the Indian church, and that suitable plans and modifications of existing organizations should be adopted, wherever necessary, so that this principle may be carried out by missionary bodies."

Since the writing of the above, there has arisen a new national consciousness in India, a reaction against things foreign, and a desire for everything to be Indian. We not only rejoice in a national awakening, but also in the fact that, with the rest of the nation, the Indian Church is awakening. We feel that the problem of an adjustment to the new national consciousness is a most vital one, but that it is not so difficult for us, as for most Missions working in this land and for the reason that we are not a Mission, but a Church in India, just as we are in America; and our people in India have the same relation to the whole Church and its government, as they would, if they lived in America. Our missionaries are not here as members of American Conferences, but have given up their membership in their home conferences and have joined our Indian conferences, and have put themselves, their characters and destiny into the hands of their India brethren; and we are proud to report that our Indian conference members have proved themselves abundantly worthy of such confidence. . . . The meaning of all this is that Methodism, being not a mission, but a Church in India, is so organized, that if India and Southern Asia do not adapt it to meet their needs and make it part of the very life of the countries, it will be their fault, and not the fault of the rigidity of the organization of Methodism. Hence, the responsibility and opportunity of this Central Conference, and particularly its Indian members, to adjust our Church to a new India, as we look out into the second century of the missionary work of our whole Church, and to our work in India. Too much emphasis cannot be put upon this problem; and here is the place for full and free discussion and wisest possible legislation.¹

2. Legislation was enacted by the Executive Board in 1919 with the purpose of giving Nationals a larger place of leadership in two of the important organizations of the Church. It was voted, with the concurrence of the Board of Foreign Missions, that the rule which had required that one half of the elected

¹MCC, 1920, pp. 57 f.

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members on the Finance Committees of the Conferences be missionaries and one half Nationals be revised so that thereafter in India the Annual Conferences be allowed to elect without any restrictions whatever, save as to the total number on the Committee.¹ It was also voted to recommend to the Central Conference of 1920 an amendment to the Constitution of the Executive Board which would allow each Annual Conference to elect a National as its representative, so that at least one of the two delegates from each Conference would be a National.² Although the amendment was not adopted by the Central Conference, an Indian was elected to the Executive Board which met in 1920.

The remarkable growth in indigenous leadership in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India is indicated by the fact that in 1907 there were 196 ordained Indian preachers while in 1920 there were 458, not including those in Burma. The number of missionaries had decreased during the same period from 104 to 88. In 1907 there were 1,513 unordained preachers, while in 1920 there were 2,081, excluding those in Burma.³

In developing indigenous leadership the Methodists early adopted two of the Indian village institutions, the leadership of the *Chaudhris*, or village headmen, and of the *Panchayat*, or village legislative and judicial body. By selecting the natural leaders in those villages which had become Christian and by giving them a simple course of instruction, a large group of voluntary workers was developed. Bishop Warne developed in a number of villages a Monthly Business Meeting of the *Chaudhris*. A series of disciplinary questions, similar to those in use is the District and Annual Conferences, were asked concerning the numerical strength of the Church, domestic and social conditions, spiritual conditions, pastoral support, and miscellaneous matters in the village Christian community. As the Indian preacher-in-charge went among the villages he gathered the *Chaudhris*

¹*MEB*, 1919, p. 9.

²*Ibid.*, p. 12.

³*RBFM*, 1907, p. 487; *MCC*, 1920, p. 180.

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together and asked them these questions. The local leaders thus came to feel a sense of responsibility for the character of Christianity in the community. In this way a responsibility which formerly rested on a force of paid workers alone was now extended to an ever increasing group of unpaid workers. By the close of 1916 Bishop Warne reported 2,173 such unpaid workers. By the use of the *Panchayat* as a village court, many of the problems which would ordinarily require a church court are settled in a manner thoroughly familiar to the village Christian.¹

3. The emphasis on Self-support was continued during the years from 1906 to 1920. The *Indian Witness* of February 21, 1907, quoted an article by Dr. J. Wilkie of the Presbyterian Church, in which he said :

As a Church the Methodists have perhaps been the most successful in developing self-support. The collection is a very prominent part of the service for them, and rightly so.

In December of the same year the *Witness* reviewed approvingly a paper which Dr. F. B. Price, a Methodist, had read before the Calcutta Missionary Conference on the subject.² The Central Conference in 1912 noted progress in Self-support, and urged that information about tithing be disseminated among the people. For those who had no cash income the use of *barkat ka bartan*, or "vessels of blessing" was urged.³ The Committee on the State of the Church in 1916 reported that

in practically all of our large centres our churches are not only self-supporting but contribute to our general benevolences. In the secondary cities also this is true to a good extent. . . . Even in the village communities real progress has been made.⁴

¹ *RBFM*, 1917, p. 65; 1918, pp. 22, 25; Warne, *India's Mass Movements*, pp. 22-24; F. W. Warne, *Our First Chaudhri Summer School* (New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the M. E. Church, n. d.).

² *Indian Witness*, December 12, 1907,

³ *MCC*, 1912, pp. 81 f. The *barkat ka bartan* is a simple earthen pot into which many of the Christian village women put a handful of grain before they cook their own meal. The proceeds from the sale of the grain are given to the church.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1916, p. 56.

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In the Northwest India Conference 75 per cent of the ministers were entirely supported by the offerings of Indian Christians.¹ In spite of the high prices of food and other necessities as a result of war and famine almost all the Districts reported increases in the amounts given for Self-support in 1917.² Bishop Warne's report to the Board of Foreign Missions in 1918 states that collections for self-support are taken on all suitable occasions.³ In their report to General Conference in 1920 the Bishops from India stated:

We recognize that the church we are establishing cannot be permanently sustained by foreign funds. To ask for continuous help would be an injustice to the home church and an injury to the spirituality of the people. We are bending every effort, therefore, to the training of our people in the principles of stewardship.⁴

A comparison of the statistics for the quadrennium ending in 1907 with that ending in 1919 shows that during the former the Methodist Episcopal Church in India contributed Rs. 130,294 for Ministerial Support, Rs. 20,754 for Benevolences, and raised for all purposes Rs. 338,027, while during the quadrennium 1915-1919 the amounts contributed were Rs. 575,197, Rs. 167,323, and Rs. 1,948,424 respectively. During the same period the number of members and probationary members increased from 125,000 to 235,000. The increase in ministerial support was about six annas per member.⁵

5. Relations with the Board of Foreign Missions

1. Even before Methodist work in India was organized into an Annual Conference, the leaders of the Church faced the difficult problem of discovering the most harmonious relation of the Missionary Society to the Methodist Church in India. That it was absolutely essential to the progress of the Church no one

¹*JGC*, 1916, p. 1198.

²*RBFM*, 1917.

³*Ibid.*, 1918, p. 24.

⁴*JGC*, 1920, p. 981

⁵*MCC*, 1908, 1920.

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denied. But there were those who sometimes felt that it was a kind of "fifth wheel" to the India Methodist ecclesiastical and administrative machine!

A very searching editorial appeared in the *Indian Witness* of April 18, 1907, on the "Function and Power of the Board of Foreign Missions." There are two possible views, pointed out the writer. First, that the Board was in fact the Church, with full power to act so far as the missionaries were concerned. This would include the power to make and enforce rules for the government of the conduct of employees of the Board, and make the relation of the missionary to the Board take precedence over his relation to an Annual Conference, and make an Annual Conference composed largely of missionaries on a Mission field a different body from one in the United States. Second, that the Board is simply the agent of the Church, for certain purposes. This view leaves the Annual Conference relation of the missionary intact and of primary importance. The editor of the *Witness* believed that the primary relation of the missionary is to his Annual Conference rather than to the Board of Foreign Missions and that his conduct should be determined first by the *Discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church rather than by the *Manual* of the Board of Foreign Missions. He emphasized the fact that the Board is the agent of the Church for certain purposes of business and has neither legislative nor judicial powers.

From time to time the missionaries of the Board felt that matters relating to their connection with the Board consumed too large a part of the time spent at Annual or Central Conferences. The Central Conference of 1912 requested that all matters which affect the status of the missionary force in India,—including furlough, terms of service, salaries, etc.—which are designed to be presented to the Board of Foreign Missions for their action, should be considered and acted upon in a private session by the missionaries of the Board present in the Central Conference or in an Annual Conference.¹

¹MCC, 1912, p. 18.

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Occasionally the question arose as to who had the final word in determining the appointment of Methodist Missionaries. In 1912 the Committee on Judiciary of the General Conference considered this matter and ruled that the Board of Foreign Missions is authorized to pass upon the physical, intellectual, and moral fitness of any one it is willing to support as a missionary, but that no minister can be assigned to a mission field or appointed to a pastoral charge or other work therein by any one except the Bishop in charge; and that no minister can be taken legally from an appointment given him by a bishop for any service in a mission field without the consent of the Bishop in charge.¹

In 1912 the Committee on Missions recommended to the General Conference that unordained missionaries, like those who were members of an Annual Conference, sent out by the Board of Foreign Missions, should labor under the direction of the particular Conference or Mission of the Church in which they might be employed. They should be appointed annually by the President of the Conference or Mission and should be subject to the same rules of removal that govern other missionaries, and should be members of the Church, the Quarterly Conference, and the District Conference where they reside.² It was also recommended that unordained missionaries of the Board of Foreign Missions be invited by the Mission or Conference to sit as associate members of their respective bodies, that they be permitted the privilege of the floor and the right to vote on all questions not ministerial or constitutional, and that they be eligible for election on Mission or Conference Finance and other committees.³

2. From the days when Bishop Thoburn began to make special appeals to the American Churches for funds the minds of Methodist leaders both in India and America were agitated by the question of "Special Gifts." The secretaries of the Missionary Society were practically forced to make a place for special gifts in

¹*JGC*, 1912, p. 566.

²*Ibid.*, 1916, p. 627,

³*Ibid.*, p. 629.

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the financial programme of the Society. But the sentiment in America against the policy of special gifts continued to grow. In addressing the Central Conference of 1908 the Bishops said:

We have become profoundly interested in the question of Special Gifts for the simple reason that in the majority of our Conferences the proportion of workers supported by these gifts is very large. In one Conference the whole, and in others nearly the whole, of the current work, apart from the support of missionaries, is entirely dependent upon Special Gifts. This state of things creates a situation that naturally awakens much solicitude, especially in this quadrennial year, when the distractions of both a presidential election and the General Conference are likely to affect the number of such gifts. It is evident that this plan for the maintenance of the missionary enterprise has "caught on" in the home Church. It may be safely assumed that it has come to stay and will probably attain larger proportions as the years go by,¹

The General Conference took action which recognized the validity of appeals for Special Gifts, but insisted that no credit would be given for such gifts until a Charge should have raised the full apportionment for the Board of Foreign Missions. Special donations should be applied in full to the purposes designated by the donors, but should be included in estimating the cost of collection and administration.²

When the Central Conference learned in 1912 that an effort was being made to put a stop to special collections or contributions for the Special Fund on the ground that such contributions endangered the success of the general collections for missions, it called attention to the fact that Special Gifts had saved the Church in India from calamity and that the reduction or closing of the Special Fund would mean disaster, due to the fact that such a large part of the work in India was being supported by Special Gifts. Furthermore, no adequate plan had been proposed as a substitute for Special Gifts. The Conference urged that General Collections be pushed entirely on their own merits, and

¹*MCC*, 1908, pp. 54 f.

²*JGC*, 1908, p. 566.

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that a special secretary be appointed to supervise Special Gift collections.¹

The General Conference of 1912 again recognized the place of Special Gifts in the missionary financial programme and, after laying down certain restrictions as to the use of Special Gifts, stated that all Special Gifts received for the field should be paid through the office of the Board of Foreign Missions, even though the total amount thereof should exceed the appropriation, and that the Board should exercise general supervision over appeals for special gifts.²

In the issue of the *Indian Witness* of April 16, 1919, there appeared an article by Dr. E. D. Soper, at that time on the faculty of Drew Biblical Seminary, written after he had made a Centenary deputation visit to the Far East. The writer caustically criticized the system of Special Gifts, saying that missionaries are sent out to share themselves with Nationals, not to spend their time before a typewriter, trying to raise money in America. "Surely our Church will not let many more years pass before it realizes the mistake that is being made and falls in line with other great bodies which have put a ban on all attempts to secure Special Gifts from the field."

The General Conference of 1290 eliminated the whole of Article VII of the Constitution of the Board of Foreign Missions which dealt with special gifts.³

6. Mission Comity and Co-operation

The question of Mission Comity and Co-operation continued to engage the attention of the leaders of Indian Methodism. In 1916 the Bishops stated that while the attainments resulting from Methodist efforts for comity and co-operation during the past quadrennium had not produced large results, the Church held herself ready to negotiate with any body which was willing to meet her in a spirit of fair compromise. In the Punjab, in the United Provinces, and in Kathiawar the Methodists had withdrawn from

¹MCC, 1912, pp. 79 f.

²JGC, 1912, p. 689.

³*Ibid.*, 1920, p. 602.

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territory and had surrendered between fifteen and twenty thousands of their converts in order that a spirit of comity might be promoted.¹

In 1918 the Executive Board considered the question of comity which had been raised by the entrance of the Methodist Episcopal Church into Tuticorin. This body was of the opinion that the Church had been justified in entering that field and that the delimitation of territory agreed upon and officially approved by the Anglican Bishop of Tinnevely and Bishop Robinson, if carried out in an amicable Christian spirit on both sides, would avoid all cause of friction. The Methodists had entered Tinnevely by providential leading and the work should be vigorously prosecuted.²

At this same meeting the Executive Board recorded its official approval of the principles of comity set forth by the National Missionary Council, and urged upon all Conferences the observation of the same. For the benefit of all Methodist leaders the Rules of Comity were printed in the Minutes of the Executive Board.³

7. Trends Toward a Policy of Concentration

Not a little stir was created in Indian Methodist circles by the appearance of an article by the Reverend J. H. Messmore in the *Witness* of August 19, 1909 under the title, "Too Much of a Good Thing." As the District Superintendent of Gharhwal, the author wrote critically of the Methodist Episcopal policy of expansion. Enthusiastic leaders in the Church and zealous agents of the missionary society had acted and continued to act as if they believed that there was no limit to the possible missionary contribution and activities of the Church. Wesley had said, "The world is my parish," meaning that he claimed the right to preach everywhere, but he was too wise and too practical to attempt to preach everywhere. But the missionary society of the

¹MCC, 1916, p. 47.

²MEB, 1918, p. 12.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 13, 22-31.

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Methodist Episcopal Church, having made Wesley's famous words its motto, seemed literally disposed to carry out Wesley's words, an impossible undertaking. In short, thought the writer, it is no exaggeration but simply a melancholy fact that the Methodists were attempting the evangelization of the whole world. This policy of unlimited expansion would remove all hope of increased appropriations for the work already established. The fact that India Methodism had the Missionary Episcopacy instead of General Superintendents who could appeal to the American Conferences put them at a disadvantage. The Church in India could not hope to attain self-support until there was a considerable decrease in pastors' salaries. Even resort to prayer would be unsuccessful because the writer believed that God's plan is for men to be guided by common sense in all their plans and efforts, and that it is absurd to expect divine assistance in carrying on an enterprise which is in serious difficulty because of the unreasonable methods that have been followed and which are likely to be persistently followed.

In commenting on this article by J. H. Messmore the *Kaukab-i-Hind* disagreed with the writer. Speaking editorially, it thought that much of the best work of the Methodist Episcopal Church would not have been opened except for the policy of expansion. But it concluded, "Nevertheless, we agree with the general point that a little less expansion to new fields and a little better support for established work would be a policy of wisdom."¹

It will be seen from the above that some of the leaders of the Methodist Church in India were beginning to question seriously the previous policy of expansion. This attitude was formulated into an official statement by the bishops in 1912 when, in addressing the Central Conference, they said:

The policy of our fathers was expansion, until we have now nine Conferences and almost unlimited territory. Providence has marvellously extended our mission from Quetta in the North-West to the Philippine Islands in the East, with millions of accessible souls wherever we turn. Our permanent

¹Quoted, *Indian Witness*, September 9, 1909.

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hold upon the support of the Home Church and our permanent success in India will better be secured by careful recognition of the fact that concentration in fields already considered by other missions to be ours, rather than expansion, should be our policy. Other missions in India recognize as ours territory whose evangelization will long require our concentrated effort. The time hastens when our work in India will be critically scrutinized and by our fruits we shall be known, and unless the great sections of India, conceded to be ours by other missions are by us evangelized, how shall we bear the test? Let concentration, and not expansion, be our future watchword.¹

Previous to 1910 the dominant note in the Methodist Missionary policy in India had been "expansion." Now we begin to hear a new note—"concentration," "conservation," "consolidation." Since 1920 this note has been frequently sounded. And of recent years, because of the financial depression, both in America and in India, that which was being adopted by choice has also become largely a matter of necessity.

¹MCC, 1912, p. 48.

CHAPTER VI

India Methodism Under the Spell of Nationalism

1920-1935

DURING the past fifteen years few thoughts have been more prominent in the minds of the leaders of India Methodism than that the Church must become thoroughly indigenous. The missionaries have been no less active than Indian leaders in working for the fulfilment of this ideal. Under the impetus of the demand for *Swaraj*¹ in National Government the desire for indigenous control in the affairs of the Church has been greatly intensified. The Indianization of the various Conferences and Committees of the Church has been rapid. Indigenous forms of worship, of music, and of architecture have been built into the life of the Church. The aspirations of youthful Indians have been encouraged, and the highest ecclesiastical office in the Church—the bishopric—has been conferred upon a National.

Yet, with this growing sense of Nationalism within the Methodist Episcopal Church in India, there has been developing a wider sense of Internationalism. Evidences are abundant that Indian Methodists have come during this period to have a larger conception than ever before of their place in the world-wide Methodist Episcopal Church. This fact has had an important bearing on several vital problems, as for example, the relation of the Central Conference in India to the General Conference in America on the one hand, and the relation of the Methodist Church in India to various movements toward Church Union on the other. It will be our purpose to note the interplay of Nationalism and Internationalism upon organizational and administrative developments between 1920 and 1935.

¹"Self-rule," or "Home Rule," has become the watchword of Indian Nationalists.

UNDER THE SPELL OF NATIONALISM

1. Nationalism and the Church

1. It is neither possible nor desirable in this place to give a detailed account of the movements in Indian National life from 1920 till 1935. A brief outline must suffice.¹

The Amritsar tragedy of April 13, 1919, had given impetus to the non-co-operation movement. When the National Congress met in 1920 non-co-operation on a wide scale was promulgated. Mr. Gandhi was the most influential figure in this Congress, and his resolution called upon the people of India to surrender all titles and honorary offices, to refuse to attend Government functions, to boycott British Courts and foreign-made goods, and to withdraw from the Councils, Government schools and colleges. Though Mr. Gandhi and many of the Congress leaders were determined to carry on their program of non-co-operation without violence, many of their followers resorted to deeds of violence. This phase of the campaign was severely criticised on all sides.² But the situation was made even more tense by the visit of the Prince of Wales in November, 1921. Riots in Bombay resulted in more than fifty deaths.³ A motion was made at the National Congress meeting in Ahmedabad that year that Congress set complete independence as its goal, but Mr. Gandhi, who did not desire to see India separated from Britain, was opposed and

¹The literature of the subject is extensive. Among the most readily accessible works which deal with the matter from our point of interest are the following: C. F. Andrews, *Gandhi of India, His Own Story* (New York: Macmillan, 1930); Andrews, *India and the Simon Report* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1930); *An Indian Approach to India* (A Symposium) (New York: Student Volunteer Movement, 1928), chaps. ii and vi; Will Durand, *The Case for India* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930); Verrier Elwin, *Christ and Satyagraha* (Pamphlet); J. S. Hoyland, *The Case for India* (London: J. M. Dent, 1929); *The Indian Social Reformer* (Poona); *The Indian Witness* (Lucknow); Clifford Manshardt, *Christianity in a Changing India* (Calcutta: Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, 1933); *National Christian Council Review* (Nagpur); K. T. Paul, *The British Connection with India* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1927); J. Sunderland, *India in Bondage—Her Right to Freedom Among the Great Nations* (New York: Lewis Copeland Co., 1929). This last contains an extensive annotated bibliography.

²A striking presentation of the Christian Indian reaction was given by Ganga Nath Shukul in the *Indian Witness* of June 1, 1921.

³*Ibid.*, November 23, 1921.

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the motion was lost. All efforts on the part of Moderates to negotiate between Government and the Congress Party failed.

A new phase of the struggle resulted from the Chauri-Chaura tragedy, when a mob attacked a police station and murdered over twenty policemen. Mr. Gandhi, realizing that the non-co-operation movement had gone out of hand, engaged in a penitential fast for five days and called off the aggressive features of the program. But disorder continued, and on March 10, 1922, Mr. Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years simple imprisonment. At Mr. Gandhi's request the people received the news of his imprisonment quietly.

In 1924 Gandhi was released because his health had given way during his two years in jail. Politically the years from 1924 till 1927 were comparatively quiet.

New excitement was created in 1927 by the announcement of the appointment of the Simon Commission. This body was to visit India for the purpose of surveying the success of the Reforms and for advising Government concerning future policy. From the first the Commission was unpopular, primarily because it contained no Indian members.

In 1929 the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, announced that it was the purpose of the British Government to give Dominion Status to India, and that a Round Table Conference would soon be summoned to meet in London to discuss the problems involved. But at this juncture Mr. Gandhi lost confidence in the promises of Government and secured the passage by the National Congress of a resolution demanding complete Independence for India. Congress also authorized a program of civil disobedience which included the non-payment of taxes. The National Liberal Federation, however, welcomed the Viceroy's announcement and called on all parties to co-operate in making the Round Table Conference a success.

As a part of his program of civil disobedience Mr. Gandhi proposed to violate the salt law, which forbade the private manufacture of salt. The arrest of many Congressmen followed. Violent attacks and reprisals took place in various sections of the country. On May 5 Gandhi was arrested and lodged in the

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Yeravada jail, and the Congress Party was not represented at the First Round Table Conference.¹

The Round Table Conference accomplished more than had been expected, and the political tension was somewhat relieved. In January, 1931, the leaders of the Congress Party were released and conferred with the delegates who had returned from London. This conference was followed by an interview between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin. An agreement was reached by which the Congress Party would discontinue the program of civil disobedience and the boycott of British goods, and Government would release political prisoners not guilty of violence, withdraw the ordinances, and restore confiscated property.²

Mahatma Gandhi was appointed the sole representative of the Congress Party at the Second Round Table Conference in September, 1931. During his absence violent outbreaks had become more frequent, and in December, 1931, India was shocked by the murder of Mr. Stevens, district magistrate of Tipperah, by a young Indian woman instigated by the terrorists. The year closed with the promulgation of the Ordinances by Government, and the arrest of Mr. Gandhi. During the course of the year nearly seventy-five thousand Congress men were arrested and jailed, resulting in comparative quiet.

In August, 1932, the British Government announced the Communal Awards, by which the number of representatives from the various religious communities in the provincial councils was to be determined. The Awards were greeted with a storm of protest from all sides. Each community felt that the number of "seats" allotted to it were insufficient. The Christian reaction was largely one of regret that political matters were to be determined on a religious basis. Various bodies of Christians denounced the plan of "separate electorates."

Following the publication of the Communal Awards the Third Round Table Conference convened in London in Novem-

¹*Parliamentary Papers: Accounts and Papers, 1930-31* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1931), XXIV, 397.

²*Ibid.*, 1931-32, XIX, 66-137.

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ber, 1932. Here it was proposed that India be organized into a Federation of Provinces and Native States. After the conclusion of the Conference the British Government proceeded to draw up the proposals in the form of the "White Paper". When published the White Paper received a varied reception, in general inclined to be unfriendly. It was proposed that the Provinces be given autonomy, and to the Federation would be given full authority in all things, except in the matter of certain "Reserved Subjects" which would remain in the hands of the Viceroy.¹

After the publication of the White Paper, steps were taken to appoint members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords to a Joint Select Committee to consider the proposals and report to Parliament. "The report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee," said the *Indian Witness* of January 3, 1935, "will have far reaching influence on India's future." The same paper noted on March 7 that the Communal Award as contained in the proposed India Bill was receiving general condemnation. The editor of the *Witness* reflected Christian sentiment as being strongly opposed to the plan of separate electorates.

A comparatively large amount of space has been given in this study to a review of political events between 1920 and 1935 because of their vital importance to the history of Christianity in India. Unless and until the political question is settled—and settled to the satisfaction of the Indian people—the Christian Church is tremendously handicapped in her efforts to make a place for herself in the life of India. Often looked upon as a foreign institution and as the religion of the British Government, Christianity has been opposed by ardent advocates of *Swaraj*.²

¹*Parliamentary Papers*, 1932-33, XI, 169-207.

²Still another phase of the subject was presented by Mr. Natarajan, editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*, in an address before the Bombay Missionary Conference in 1923. Speaking on the theme, "The Future of Christian Missions," he said, "The European War and no less the European Peace have discredited the Christianity of the Churches. The Christian missionary has no chance of getting a hearing now, unless he distinguishes between Christ and Christianity and between Christianity and Western civilization." He also strongly condemned "proselytism," which, he said, had been the policy of the Christian Church (*Indian Witness*, July 26, 1923).

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Since religious communalism has been brought into the struggle by the Awards conversions to Christianity have been resented by those who are thinking in terms of the numerical strength of the various religious groups.¹ The leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India have been forced to take cognizance of the political movements in India during the past fifteen years.

2. The response of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India to the Nationalist environment is perhaps best reflected in the pages of the *Minutes of the Central Conference* and of the *Indian Witness*. The Episcopal Address to the Central Conference of 1923 discussed at length the relation of the Church to the Nationalist Movement. The combination of intense race and national culture with a renaissance of the ethnic faiths had produced intense opposition to Christianity as a phase of Western civilization and culture. The attempt had been made to identify Christianity with Western civilization. The weak points and failures of the West had been held up as visible proof of the falsity and inadequacy of Christianity.² The effects of this movement had been felt in the Church. There had been a growing desire for *Swaraj* or self-determination in the Indian Church. The Church was moreover not only asking for *Swaraj* but for Indianization at once, even before *Swaraj* had been granted. With both of these ideals the leaders of the Church were in hearty accord.³ The desire on the part of Nationals to control the affairs of the Church is natural, and the Bishops desired that while the Church in India should be subject to the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church and should be loyal to the providential genius of Methodist faith and policy, she should nevertheless be free to direct her own affairs within these broad and generous limits.⁴

After carefully discussing the Nationalist Movement the Central Conference resolved:

¹It has been contended that this is Gandhi's motive in opposing conversions to Christianity.

²MCC, 1923, pp. 42 f.

³*Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴*Ibid.*

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1. That the Indian Christian Community, as represented by our Church, identify itself with non-Christian Communities in such national movements as reflect legitimate aspirations, as for example:

(a) The movement to obtain Swaraj as the ultimate goal and

(b) The various social reform movements,

2. That social contacts with non-Christian Communities be established, so far as possible.

3. That our co-operation should not only provide an avenue for working towards political development but should be with a view to help in inculcating ideals of strict national righteousness and the fearless condemnation of wrong wherever found.¹

In 1928 Bishop J. W. Robinson reported to the General Conference that the tense political situation in India was having its repercussion on the work of the Church. The coming in of the Reforms, in which there was an element of democracy, had made both Hindu and Mohammedan bodies apprehensive of numerical opposition, and both had recently taken measures to win back to their own faith converts who had been won from them to other faiths.²

At the same time that the Central Conference was in session at Cawnpore, in 1931, the Round Table Conference was meeting in London. It was only natural that the National Movement should occupy a large place in the thoughts and discussions of the leaders of Indian Methodism in conference. A resolution of great significance was adopted:

Whereas, our people are in confusion as to what the Christian attitude should be toward national life in general, and toward the present political problems and movements in particular, and hence need some statement defining our attitude in these matters, therefore be it

Resolved,

1. That, we accept the idea of Dominion Status for India with deep satisfaction, and that we pledge ourselves to help in

¹MCC, p. 74.

²JGC, XXX (1928), 908.

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every legitimate way possible toward the making of Dominion Status a success.

2. That we realize that communalism is one of the greatest obstacles in the making of Dominion Status a success, and that we hereby declare ourselves to be opposed to communalism. We feel that neither race nor religion should be used for separatist social and political ends. We hereby state that we have no intention of creating a separate political entity called the Christian Community. We believe in the Christian Church as a moral and spiritual organization and as a means of the corporate development of the moral and spiritual life, but we do not desire to build up around the Christian Church a separate social and political entity called the Christian Community. If this kind of community has been built up, part of the responsibility has been ours. But we now feel that this period of segregation is over; we have no intention of continuing this separatist mentality in our people. We desire passionately a united India. But part of the responsibility for this communalism is not ours. If those who desired to give their spiritual allegiance to Christ had been allowed to stay in their homes and be frank, open baptised Christians then this communalism would not have been built up. We are even now ready to say that if those who desire to follow Christ should be allowed to stay in their homes without social or political penalty, then we are willing to see the Christian community as a political entity fade out leaving the Christian Church as a moral and spiritual organization contributing its power to the uplift and regeneration of this land. We have no desire to use the Christian Church for the gaining of political power. Part of the remedy for this communalism which has been built up around the Christian Church lies in our hands, but more so does it lie in the hands of those who have, in general, laid social penalties on those who have changed their spiritual allegiance.¹

A contributed article in the *Indian Witness* of March 10, 1932, set forth five lines of activity in which Christians should have their part in the National Movement. They should express themselves as firmly committed to the ideal of Dominion Status, and should place unswerving faith in "Joint Electorates." They should use Indian-made goods, and should work for better inter-racial and inter-communal understanding. They should band themselves into a fellowship of prayer and meditation for the success of the movement. The *Witness* announced editorially on

¹MCC, 1931, pp. 46 f.

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September 8, when the question of the Communal Awards was being discussed, that Christians desired joint electorates and were willing to trust their political destiny in the hands of their brothers of India, and challenged the other communities to do the same. On October 20 the same paper printed a "Christian Manifesto" signed by thirty-seven outstanding Indian leaders, among whom were Methodists, denouncing the separate electorates as proposed in the Communal Awards.

It was only natural that Indian Methodists who were beginning to take an active interest in Nationalism should have sought to embody some of the ideals of Nationalism in the organization and administration of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We shall note presently the results of these efforts.

2. The Centenary and World Service.

The celebration of the Centenary of Methodist Episcopal Missions began in America in 1918, and during the following year more than five millions of dollars were contributed to foreign missions. In 1920 the Centenary was launched in full force in India. The India Centenary Commission met in Lucknow on January 20 and set the financial goal for Indian Methodists at five million rupees to be raised in five years. During the year there were organized Centenary Training Conferences for young people and for laymen, "Minute Men's" conventions, and numerous committees for a widely varied programme. The *Centenary Campaign Quarterly* was published from April.¹

After a year of such activity Dr. B. T. Badley, the Executive Secretary for India, was able to report on the "Significance and Success of the Centenary" in the pages of the *Indian Witness*. Pledges to the extent of rupees two million four hundred thousand were reported.² In September a Centenary Council was organized and it was decided that the movement should continue in India until 1925 although it would close in America in 1923.

Even before the end of 1923 it became apparent to leaders of the Church in America that the Centenary had not accom-

¹*Indian Witness*, February 4, 11; March 24, 31, 1920.

²April 27, 1921.

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plished all that had been hoped for it. Whereas the pledges for the work of foreign missions were for more than ten million dollars a year the Board of Foreign Missions never received more than \$6,165,000, and in 1924 the income fell below five million dollars. In August the *Indian Witness* expressed great alarm at the decrease of more than a million dollars in the benevolent contributions from May, 1922 till May, 1923. And when the Board of Foreign Missions met in November the Methodist Church was startled to learn that the Board had incurred a debt of \$2,247,951.

When the Centenary funds began to pour into the treasury in 1919 the Board of Foreign Missions inaugurated its enlarged program throughout the world, a program which was again increased in 1920. In America and on the foreign fields large sums of money were spent on property and buildings, and in employing new workers. The policy of expediency and of loose supervision of the foreign fields which had characterized the work of the Missionary Society and of the Board up until this time proved fatal in the present crisis. Secretaries and missionaries entered upon a wild "spree" of spending, with the expectation that the Centenary funds would prove adequate to cover all their obligations. After five years of such disorganized extravagance the Board awoke to find itself more than two millions of dollars in debt.

The General Conference in 1924 took the situation firmly in hand. Dr. John R. Edwards and Dr. Ralph E. Diffendorfer were elected Corresponding Secretaries, and instructions were given that the indebtedness should be cleared off. When the Board met in November the Secretaries gave a careful analysis of the causes of the enormous deficit. These included very heavy expenses in securing and disbursing the funds, a large deficit on the Columbus Centenary Celebration, underwriting a portion of the Interchurch World Movement, the cost of the War Emergency and Reconstruction programme, adverse exchange, and Loans and Advance to the Field. Many years before the Centenary, it was the custom of the Board to loan money to the field for property purchases. Some of the most substantial properties on the field

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were financed in this way. During the days of the Centenary promotion, when it was apparent that the income of the Board would be increased, additional property projects were financed by loans, the same to be made the first charge of Centenary funds. In 1924 loans from the General Treasury totaling \$1,326,584 were one of the chief causes of the debt.

By the end of October, 1924, the indebtedness had become more than three million dollars. Nineteen hundred and twenty proved to be the peak year in gifts for foreign missions, and since that time the Board has had to operate on steadily diminishing incomes. In spite of this fact, however, strenuous efforts have been made to reduce the indebtedness. Yet the Treasurer's report in November, 1924, showed a deficit of more than \$600,000.¹

No factor has so largely influenced the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India during the past fifteen years as has the financial crisis. Before 1920, it is true, there were large property debts in several of the India Conferences, especially in Bombay and Bengal. But the property bought during the "optimism of the Centenary 'boom', when funds were expected and money more slowly realized than needed" saddled the Church in India with debts, which in 1931 still amounted to more than a million dollars.² During the years since the Centenary closed a considerable part of the funds needed for current work had to be diverted toward interest on property loans. Yet the fact must not be overlooked that the Church possesses some very valuable property as a result of Centenary funds. The total value of Methodist property in 1931 was reported as being more than eight million dollars.³

We do not possess the data on which to base an analysis of the psychological effect of the "failure" of the Centenary upon the morale of the leaders and members of the Methodist Episcopal

¹*Journal of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1924), pp. 64-70, *passim*. Cited hereafter as *JBFM*.

²*MEB*, 1931, p. 41.

³*Ibid.*, p. 42.

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Church in India. The almost annual announcement of further "cuts" has created a sense of insecurity on the part of all who are in any way dependent upon the funds from America. During the Centenary days a large number of workers were employed by the Church in various capacities. Heartache, misunderstanding, and even bitter resentment have resulted from the necessity of dismissing many of these workers when appropriations have been reduced. It seems more than probable that the worthy progress which was being made toward self-support suffered a check when large sums of money from abroad were poured into India during the Centenary. And now the urge toward self-support is probably due as much to necessity as to a carefully worked out policy. It has been found difficult to convince those who once saw the "Mission" spending money with a lavish hand that the performance cannot be repeated! And as long as there seems to be the slightest hope of the pastor's salary being paid from American funds, why undertake to help pay it from one's own small income?

According to the legislation of the General Conference in 1924 all the benevolent funds of the Methodist Episcopal Church were placed under the supervision of the "World Service Commission." The Commission met in June and organized the Co-operating Administrative Staff. To this Staff, under the general supervision of the Commission, was committed the whole task of the promotion of general benevolences.¹ Through World Service a unified appeal is made to the American Churches, and the benevolent funds are distributed among the various benevolent Boards on a percentage basis. The leaders of the missionary enterprise have felt that this plan has worked great hardship to the missionary programme, for, it is contended, a large proportion of the funds are contributed because of the appeal which foreign missions exert, while a relatively small proportion of the funds are applied to the foreign mission programme. The opportunity of direct appeals to the churches on behalf of foreign missions was

¹*JBFM*, 1924, p. 47.

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made even less possible by legislation enacted by the General Conferences of 1928 and 1932.¹

In India the Centenary Commission was in 1923 merged into as new organization called the Council of Literature, Publicity, and Stewardship.² This in turn was organized by the Executive Board into a World Service Council in 1925.³ Mr. W. A. Mueller was elected Executive Secretary of the Council, but upon his departure to America on furlough the Council ceased to function. The last Report of the Council was presented to the Executive Board in 1928.⁴

3. Conferences, Boards, Committees

1. The steady growth in church membership in the Mass Movement areas of Gujarat, Hyderabad, and Northwest India resulted in the formation of new circuits, the organization of new districts, and the appointment of additional preachers. The work had developed to such an extent by 1920 that the Central Conference of that year asked the General Conference to grant Enabling Acts for the formation of several new Annual Conferences and Mission Conferences.⁵ These requests were granted, and during the next few years the bishops set up the new Conferences.

The Lucknow Annual Conference was organized by Bishop Warne on February 1, 1921. The Conference was composed of eight Districts and had a membership of sixty members.⁶ The Gujarat Annual Conference was organized on December 14, 1922 at Godhra by Bishop J. W. Robinson. It was composed of four districts.⁷ The Indus River Mission Conference, composed of the Sind-Baluchistan District of the Bombay Conference and of five districts

¹*Journal Delegated Conference*, XXX (1928), 582 f., 1127-74; XXXI (1932), 672-77, 1130-49, 1643-54.

²*MEB*, 1923, p. 13.

³*Ibid.*, 1925, p. 30.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1928, p. 20.

⁵*MCC*, 1920, pp. 106 f.

⁶Allahabad, Arrah, Ballia, Cawnpore, Gonda, Lucknow, Rae-Bareli, and Tirhoot Districts. (See *Minutes Lucknow Annual Conference*.)

⁷Ahmedabad, Baroda, Godhra, and Kathiawar Districts. (See *Minutes Gujarat Annual Conference* [Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House].)

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taken from the Northwest India Conference, was set up by Bishop J. W. Robinson in January, 1922. Through the Central Conference of 1923 this Conference petitioned General Conference to grant an Enabling Act permitting it to be organized into an Annual Conference. The Indus River Annual Conference was organized on November 19, 1924, by Bishop Robinson.¹ The Central Conference of 1928 requested General Conference to grant an Enabling Act permitting the formation of a Mission Conference in the Sind and Baluchistan territories, but with the withdrawal of the Methodist work from Baluchistan this Conference was never formed.²

The Hyderabad Annual Conference was organized on December 16, 1926, in Vikarabad, by Bishop B. T. Badley. It was composed of six districts.³ On November 24, 1927, the Burmese work, which had been organized for a number of years as a Mission Conference, became the Burma Annual Conference.⁴

On January 27, 1920, the Executive Board of the Central Conference formally organized the English-speaking work of the Church into the English Mission of India and Burma. The work was to be supervised in five districts: the Burma, Karachi-Sind, South India, Upper India, and Western India Districts.⁵ The English Mission had its first session on February 3, 1921, under the presidency of Bishop H. Lester Smith. It was composed of twenty-eight members. Because of a number of important difficulties it was voted not to organize the Mission into an actual administrative organization, but to advise the continuance of the Mission as an informal union of the English churches and institutions for the purpose of stimulating the English work, by occasional meetings for the consideration of problems and for inspira-

¹Ajmere, Batala, Bikanir, Hissar and Lahore Districts.

²*Minutes of the Indus River Annual Conference* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1925); *MCC*, 1928, p. 124.

³*Minutes of the Hyderabad Annual Conference* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1927), *passim*.

⁴*Minutes of the Burma Annual Conference* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1928), *passim*.

⁵*Indian Witness*, February 4, 1920.

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tion.¹ Bishop Smith was appointed Superintendent of the Mission. It was decided that all the members should continue to retain their relationship to the Annual Conferences in whose bounds they resided.² The English Mission proved to be unworkable almost from its inception, and the Central Conference of 1923 voted to concur in a memorial from the Bombay Annual Conference to the General Conference, requesting the repeal of all legislation or enabling acts either ordering or permitting the organization of the English work into a separate Mission or Mission Conference. The bishops were requested instead to arrange for a meeting of a Council or Association of English Churches to be called biennially at dates and place to be fixed by them.³

The Central Conference of 1928 recommended the appointment of a Commission on English-speaking Church work for the purpose of further developing this work. Such a Commission was organized,⁴ but the Central Conference of 1931 voted to discontinue this special Commission as well as its Committee on English Work.⁵ The English work is now administered as a part of the regularly organized Annual Conference within whose bounds the churches or institutions lie.

The Board of Home and Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia, organized in 1920, selected the Babua District in Bihar as the field of its missionary activity. In 1923 the Central Conference requested permission of the General Conference to organize the Babua Field into a Mission during the ensuing quadrennium.⁶

2. Methodist leaders both in America and India have been greatly interested during the past fifteen years in the development in the powers and functions of the Central Conferences. In India interest in the Central Conference has been greatly stimulated by the Nationalist Movement. The degree to which this body

¹*Indian Witness* February 16, 1920.

²*Ibid.*, February 9, 1921.

³*MCC*, 1923, p. 109.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1928, pp. 130 f.

⁵*Ibid.*, 1931, p. 48.

⁶*Ibid.*, 1923, p. 102.

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achieves autonomy very well indicates the degree to which the Methodist Episcopal Church in India is self-directing. The rapid development in the importance of the Central Conferences in the various mission fields of the Methodist Church has created a new page in the history of Methodist polity, for the whole Church has been forced to adjust itself to new problems created by the growing power of the Central Conferences.

The pages of the *Indian Witness*, the official organ of Indian Methodism, reflect the interest which this subject has attracted. Previous to the Central Conference in 1923 the *Witness* carried numerous editorials and articles on the constitution and powers of Central Conference. The Episcopal Address to the Central Conference of 1924 devoted considerable space to this subject, and the Conference itself presented twenty-eight memorials to the ensuing General Conference requesting changes in the *Discipline* with reference to the powers and duties of Central Conferences!¹ That the General Conference acted favorably on a majority of these can be seen by comparing the chapter on Central Conferences (chapter iv) in the *Discipline* of 1920 and that of 1924.

The General Conference in 1920 had appointed a Commission on Central Conferences. The Bishops having Episcopal supervision of the foreign fields were members of this Commission. In addressing the Central Conference of 1923 the bishops inquired whether the Conference in Southern Asia desired a change in the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church so that Central Conferences would be empowered to elect National Bishops; whether the Central Conference desired the right of nominating or of electing its own general officers; and whether the Central Conference was willing to surrender the right of its representatives to have a part in choosing the general officers of the Church at large in order that it might ask for freedom to choose its own leaders without outside interference.² These were crucial questions, and the Conference was hardly prepared to request the full powers suggested by them. A memorial did

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 46-50, 93-99.

²*Ibid.*, p. 48.

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ask, however, that, "with the exception of determining the number of Bishops, a Central Conference shall have authority to determine the number of general officers in all departments of the work of the Church within its area."¹

The Commission appointed in 1920 presented its report to the General Conference of 1924. The preamble to their report significantly opened with the words, "In the interest of larger self-direction in the affairs of the Methodist Episcopal Church in countries other than the United States, there shall be Central Conferences....."² The recommendations of the Commission were embodied in legislation giving wider powers to Central Conferences. The powers are recorded in sixteen paragraphs of the *Discipline*. Among these the most significant were the power to make such changes in rules regarding church membership worship, and the local ministry as peculiar conditions may require, to edit and publish its own edition of the *Discipline*, to supervise the missionary work undertaken by the Church within its bounds, to make such modifications in the rules concerning temporal economy as may be desirable, to supervise such institutions, interests and properties of the Methodist Episcopal Church within its jurisdiction as may have been provided by funds raised within its bounds or as may have been intrusted to it, to fix the boundaries of the Annual Conferences, Mission Conferences, and Missions within its bounds and enter into agreements with other Churches or Missions for the division of territory or of responsibility for Christian work, and to recommend the number of general officers in all departments of the work of the Church within its bounds—with the exception of determining the number of bishops.³

The Central Conference of 1928 met in an atmosphere charged with incessant demands for larger indigenous control in the affairs of Church and State. A significant resolution was introduced by a National on the first day of business which stated that,

¹MCC, 1923 p. 98.

²JGC, 1924, p. 1693.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 623-25.

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Whereas in the providence of God we believe that the time has arrived to take a further step in the Indianization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.....we hereby memorialize the General Conference to elect one of our Nationals Missionary Bishop.....¹

Another resolution requested the General Conference to amend the Third Restrictive Rule so as to permit a Central Conference to elect a Bishop or General Superintendent to have Episcopal jurisdiction limited to the bounds of the Central Conference.² Other memorials relating to the powers of Central Conference were also presented to the General Conference.³

Proposals regarding Central Conferences made by groups and individuals all over the world were so numerous that the General Conference of 1928 appointed a Commission to investigate the whole matter with instructions to report to the Conference within five days. Two constitutional amendments were proposed by the Commission, the first of which would give constitutional basis to Central Conferences, and the second would empower Central Conferences to elect Bishops or General Superintendents subject to such conditions as the General Conference might prescribe. Should the General Conference adopt the amendments they would be submitted to the Annual Conferences for vote. Upon their concurrence, the Bishops would be authorized to announce the amendments as the law of the Church. Other articles were added to the "Powers of Central Conferences" and a new chapter (chapter ix) was added to the *Discipline* dealing with the "Powers, Rights and Duties of Bishops or General Superintendents Elected by Central Conferences," based largely upon the recommendations received from India. The Central Conference in India was granted the power to elect one Bishop during the quadrennium.⁴

The Central Conference of Southern Asia, acting under the authority of the constitutional amendment, which had received

¹MCC, 1928, p. 71.

²*Ibid.*, p. 72.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 72-88.

⁴JGC, XXX (1928), 490, 715-24.

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the overwhelming approval of the Annual Conferences, proceeded to elect its first National Bishop, Dr. Jashwant Rao Chitambar. Then it turned to the matter of requesting more powers from the General Conference! These included the petition that the Central Conference of Southern Asia be granted an enabling act to elect any number of Bishops required to bring the total on the field up to four, the power to fix the episcopal residences of all bishops or General Superintendents resident in Southern Asia and to make them all amenable to the Central Conference in matters of administration, the right to elect the delegates to the General Conference who would represent the Indian Annual Conferences, the power to establish a Council of Co-operation between the Central Conference and the Board of Foreign Missions and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and the right

to make such rules and regulations necessary for the government and direction of the Church within its territory as is not denied to it by the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or by General Conference legislation directly related to Central Conferences, provided that all its enactments, actions and decisions shall be subject to review by the General Conference in respect to questions relating to Constitutionality.¹

The General Conference of 1928 had authorized the continuance of the Commission on Central Conferences. This body presented a masterly report to the General Conference which assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1932. It reported that the vote on the two Constitutional amendments had been 10,914 ministerial votes for and 340 votes against, and 7,576 lay votes for and 164 votes against adoption— a symbol of the overwhelming approval of the Methodist Church to the remarkable development of the Central Conferences in her mission fields. It then traced the two types of missionary policy which had obtained on the mission fields: that of Churches like the Presbyterians and Baptists, who had established churches independent of the Mission from the first, and that of the Methodist where Church and Mission had never been separated. The problems of devolution

¹MCC, 1931, pp. 35 f., 68-71.

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had consequently been quite different. The organization of Central Conferences on the mission fields had brought the Methodist Episcopal Church face to face with the necessity of adapting her constitution to new situations. The Commission could see three possible directions in which the Central Conference development might move: (1) the Central Conferences could develop into independent Methodist Churches, such as now exist in Japan, Mexico, and Korea; (2) a Central Conference might be formed in the United States, and then all the Central Conferences could be represented in a General Conference which would thus become a small body to deal with ecumenical questions and general problems; (3) the Central Conferences might continue as at present with large powers, but with the General Conference the final authority. This plan in effect would maintain the General Conference largely as a body to deal with the affairs of the churches in the United States.¹ In commenting on these three possible trends the *Indian Witness* was of the opinion that if present conditions should continue the Central Conferences would be practically forced into becoming independent Churches. The second path was the only satisfactory one.²

Though the General Conference of 1932 amended certain sections of the Disciplinary chapter on Central Conferences so as to remove some ambiguities, and the powers of Central Conference were listed as being twenty-four in number, no marked advance was made in giving further autonomy to Central Conferences. The request of the Central Conference of Southern Asia for authority to make any desirable rules not contrary to the Constitution of the Church was rejected.³

In its issue of June 20, 1935, the *Indian Witness* again raised the question of the representation of foreign Annual Conferences in the General Conference. As larger power is being given to the Central Conferences it is only natural that Annual Conferences

¹JGC, XXXI (1932), 1438-52.

²June 16, 1932.

³JGC, XXXI (1932), 1452. For a detailed statement concerning the Organization, Powers and Bishops of the Central Conferences the reader is referred to the *Discipline*, chapters iv and xiv,

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within Central Conference bounds should be willing to surrender some of their power and representation in the General Conference. The question of the expense of foreign delegates to sessions of General Conference must also be considered. The *Witness* suggests that each Annual Conference in India elect its delegates according to the present ratio, and that the Central Conference select from this group two laymen and two ministers who shall be authorized to represent India at the General Conference. It is apparent that this would constitute one step toward the adoption of the second alternative suggested by the Commission, for these delegates would not really represent Annual Conferences, but a Central Conference, and if other Central Conferences should adopt the same procedure the General Conference would soon become an ecumenical conference composed of representatives of National Central Conferences.

3. The trend toward the more thorough Indianization of the Central Conference tended to bring out into sharp relief the opposite tendency in the development of the Executive Board. From time to time voices of protest were raised against the amount of authority which was being centered in the Executive Board, which after all had no traditional place in Methodist polity. The efforts being made to avoid any distinction between Nationals and missionaries—between Church and Mission—were being thwarted by the development of the Executive Board, which was fast becoming a kind of "Mission." The Episcopal Address in 1923 put the matter quite bluntly:

It seems desirable in this connection to point out that it has always been found to be a dangerous thing, a thing destructive of co-operation and productive of discord, to concentrate continuous and indefinite and rather arbitrary powers in the hands of a few. It is neither Methodist nor democratic. The indications are that in India, we are drifting toward a centralization and an arbitrary control of All-India Interests. Is this what you want?¹

The same thought was expressed by the Reverend A. B. Coates in the *Indian Witness* of August 22, 1923. He advised that

¹MCC, 1923, p. 49.

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the name of the body be changed to the "Financial Board" and that it should meet at the same time as the Central Conference, thus keeping the highest power in the Central Conference. This would curb the tendency to give more power to a small body, largely missionary.¹

The Central Conference of 1923 sought to make the Executive Board more representative and voted that in addition to the members elected by the Finance Committees and the Field Reference Committees there should be one member from each Annual and Mission Conference, and five Indian laymen elected by Central Conference.² In 1928, the Executive Board itself recommended to the Central Conference that its Constitution be amended so as to provide only one regular session each quadrennium, near the middle of the quadrennium.³

The Central Conference of 1931 instructed the Executive Board to arrange for a study of the work of the Church in Southern Asia and to report to the Board of Foreign Missions and to the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society by September, 1931. Such a study should provide for (1) an analysis of the debts of the Conferences, Institutions, and Boards, (2) an examination of the occupation of the field and of the possibility and advisability of re-alignments with other Missions, and (3) the preparation of a program for the future to challenge the Home Base and Indian Church. The Executive Board accordingly organized the "Joint Survey Committee" whose significant report will be considered in another connection.⁴

After the Executive Board had been increased in size and had begun to meet quadrennially there was felt the need of a small group which might be called together more often to care for matters requiring immediate attention. Consequently a committee of the Executive Board recommended in October, 1931, that an Interim Committee be organized.

¹In 1920 there was only one Indian member on the Executive Board, and in 1923 only two. In 1925, however, ten of the forty-one members were National.

²MCC, 1923, p. iv.

³*Ibid.*, 1928, p. 83.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1931, p. 70.

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For the purpose of securing adequate supervision and review of the financial position of our Church and Mission enterprises in Southern Asia, and further as a means of preventing the creation of unauthorized debts, we recommend the appointment of an Interim Committee of the Executive Board which shall be composed of the Bishops resident in Southern Asia, the Branch Treasurer of the Board of Foreign Missions, the Central Treasurer of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and the Secretary of the Executive Board. This Committee shall act in a purely advisory capacity.¹

Since 1931 there has been no essential change in the organization or functions of the Executive Board or of the Interim Committee.

4. Episcopal Supervision

1. The General Conference of 1920 ushered in a new day in Episcopal administration of foreign fields. Under the inspiration of the appeal of the Centenary and the expectation of increased collections from Centenary subscriptions, the Church marked out an entirely new line of operation. Seventeen of the General Superintendents were assigned to residencies abroad. During the following quadrennium the mission fields were more carefully and efficiently supervised than was possible in any preceding quadrennium.² Bishops F. W. Warne, J. W. Robinson, Fred B. Fisher, and H. Lester Smith had Episcopal Supervision in India during this period. Bishop John E. Robinson, who had been elected Missionary Bishop in 1904, retired in 1920 and died on February 15, 1922.³ India lost another of her Bishops during this quadrennium—possibly the greatest of them all. James Mills Thoburn was born at Clairsville, Ohio, in 1836. He arrived in India in 1859, and was elected the first Missionary Bishop of the Indian Church in 1888. His health broke in 1900, but he continued in the effective relation till 1908. His death occurred on November 28, 1922.⁴ Still another of India Methodism's bishops was "translated" during the fifteen years under review. Bishop

¹*MCC*, 1931 p. 9.

²*JGC*, XIX (1924), 1186.

³*MCC*, 1923, pp. 127-30.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 131-38.

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Francis W. Warne, who retired in 1928, died on February 29, 1932.¹

Although the majority of Methodist leaders in India previous to 1920 had opposed the suggestions that India be put under the supervision of General Superintendents, after this proposal was actually put into effect all were highly pleased. The Central Conference of 1923 requested that the plan be continued. The failure of the Centenary funds to fulfil expectations caused many in America to advise the withdrawal of two bishops from India. But the Central Conference was emphatic in its opinion that adequate supervision required four resident bishops, and requested the General Conference to return the four bishops who had been in residence. Opposition was also expressed to the proposal to elect Bishops for a limited term.²

By the General Conference of 1924 Dr. Brenton Thoburn Badley, who had served India so effectively as Executive Secretary of the Centenary Commission and who had just been elected editor of the *Witness*, was elected a General Superintendent and assigned to residence in India. By the same Conference Bishop H. Lester Smith was assigned to an area in America.³

The Central Conference in 1928 again expressed the need of four resident Bishops in India, and because of the retirement of Bishop Warne, asked that adequate provision be made for Episcopal Supervision. No other bishop was elected or assigned to India. A crisis was created when Bishop Fisher withdrew from India and from the episcopacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Until the election of Bishop Chitambar in 1931 India

¹JGC, XXXI (1932), 885-88. Since the recounting of the biographies of India Methodism's heroes does not come within the scope of this study, we must check our temptation and desire to say more of these worthy leaders. Biographies and tributes to each of the three bishops are to be found in current issues of the *Indian Witness*.

²MCC, 1923, pp. 69 f. See also, *Indian Witness*, July 25, 1923. The agitation in favor of a "term episcopacy" is growing stronger, and it is probable that this measure will be adopted in the near future. The adoption of a plan for limiting the term of the episcopal office will be a forward step toward Methodist participation in Church Union.

³JGC, XIX (1924), 362. *Indian Witness*, June 4, 1924.

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was under the supervision of only two Superintendents, Bishops Robinson and Badley.

To prevent the possibility of such a crisis in the future the Central Conference of 1931 requested the General Conference to fix the number of bishops at four, and to grant an enabling act authorizing the Central Conference to elect one or more bishops whenever necessary to bring the number up to four.¹ When the General Conference convened, however, economy was its watchword, and it was only by the barest majority that three bishops were elected to fill the eight places made vacant by the death or retirement of bishops during the quadrennium. The Calcutta Area, which had been under the supervision of Bishop Fisher, was eliminated, and no fourth bishop was assigned to India. The *Witness* of May 26, 1932, pointed out the fact that the especially difficult demands of the time—nationalism, financial crisis, and changing missionary policies—would throw an unbearably heavy burden upon the three resident bishops.

2. Under the impetus of the Nationalist Movement there had been a growing desire on the part of both Nationals and missionaries in India Methodism for the election of a National as Bishop. It was proposed in 1923 that a memorial be presented to General Conference requesting that a National be elected, but the sentiment was not strong enough to secure the required action. When the Central Conference met in 1928, however, one of the earliest resolutions presented was that by Mr. N. K. Mukerji to the effect that the time had now come to make the Church more Indian by the election of a National as Bishop. The resolution proposed that the Central Conference nominate to the General Conference a National who would be acceptable to the Methodist Church in India. This resolution was referred to the Committee on Episcopacy, with instruction to submit an early report. Mr. Mukerji then proposed the name of Dr. J. R. Chitambar as the nominee of the Central Conference. But this resolution was tabled pending the report of the Committee. In submitting its report the Committee on Episcopacy adopted the

¹MCC, 1931, p. 35.

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wording of Mr. Mukerji's resolution as a preamble and first resolution, and added a second dealing with the support of a National bishop. Upon the adoption of the report the Central Conference proceeded to ballot for the nomination of a National who would be India's choice as bishop. Little other business could be attended to by the Central Conference until this all-absorbing matter was settled. The balloting soon revealed the fact that some of the members of the Conference were not ready to commit themselves to the proposal, and they succeeded in preventing the necessary majority by scattering their votes among the weaker candidates. As a consequence, after the twenty-first ballot, in which Dr. Devadasan received 57 votes and Dr. Chitambar 54—76 votes being required for nomination—the balloting ceased, and the Conference left the matter of election to the wisdom of the General Conference.¹

Other memorials concerning the election of National Bishops had been presented from other mission fields, and the General Conference, as we have already noted, enacted the legislation necessary to authorize Central Conference to elect bishops. At the same time regulations were enacted concerning the number of bishops to be elected by each Central Conference, the manner of conducting elections, the tenure of office, the salary and support, and the residences of "Central Conference Bishops."² A new chapter was also ordered inserted in the *Discipline* stating that in authority the "Central Conference Bishop" should have co-ordinate power with "General Conference Bishops" resident within the bounds of the Central Conference, and that his rights and duties should be the same as theirs. He should be amenable to the Central Conference, with right of appeal to the General Conference.³ Upon the adoption of the Constitutional Amendment by the Annual Conferences the Central Conference in Southern Asia was granted authority to elect one Bishop or General Superintendent.⁴

¹JGC, XXX (1928,) pp. 4, 17, 29, 71 f.; *Indian Witness*, February 1, 1928.

²JGC, XXX (1928), 718.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 722 f.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 723.

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When the Central Conference of Southern Asia convened in Cawnpore in 1931 it was discovered that several matters had to be attended to before the body was ready to proceed to the election of a bishop. First, after considerable discussion, it was voted that the Bishop to be elected by the Central Conference should have the same tenure as that of a Bishop elected by the General Conference. There was strong agitation for a "Term Episcopacy," but the group favorable to this plan was not in the majority.¹ Then the question of the salary of the bishop was determined. There were those who, looking to the question of self-support, would have had the salary relatively small. But others were of the opinion that the duties and dignity of the office required a larger salary. The Bishop's income was fixed at Rs. 6,000 per year, with certain additional amounts for rent and travel.² And finally, the question of the residence of the bishop had to be determined, for language and experience had to be taken into account. Jubbulpore was fixed as the episcopal residence.³

On the afternoon of the fourth day of Central Conference, December 31, 1930, the Committee on Episcopacy presented and the Conference adopted the resolution, "That the Central Conference of Southern Asia now proceed to elect a Bishop or General Superintendent, according to the terms of the Enabling Act of the General Conference of 1928."⁴ On the first ballot there was no election, but on the second Dr. Jashwant Rao Chitambar received 85 of the 121 votes cast, and was declared elected the first National Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.⁵ The official minutes of the Conference make no mention of the extreme excitement and enthusiasm with which this announcement was received by the members of the Conference and by Methodists throughout India, and the world.

¹*MCC*, 1931, p. 34.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.

³*Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1931, pp. 10, 34.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 11. The issues of the *Daily Witness* and of the *Indian Witness* for January, 1931, print biographical sketches and articles concerning the work of Bishop Chitambar. An editorial in the *Indian Witness* of January 8 is especially noteworthy.

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The General Conference of 1932 not only renewed its legislation giving to a Bishop or General Superintendent the same status, rights, and duties during his tenure of office, within the territory of the Central Conference, as a General Superintendent elected by the General Conference, but also voted that he shall have, upon the invitation and assignment by the Board of Bishops, the right to preside at sessions of the General Conference, and shall have the right of full participation in the meetings of the Board of Bishops, whenever the interests of his Central Conference or the interests common to all Central Conferences are involved.¹ The General Conference of 1932 also authorized the Central Conference of Southern Asia to elect one Bishop or General Superintendent at the session of the Central Conference immediately preceding the General Conference of 1936.² The election of Bishop Chitambar was an event of great significance. There is now no office or function within the Methodist organization to which a National is not eligible, and there are very few offices in Indian Methodism in which Nationals are not serving, and serving well. It is impossible to calculate the influence of Bishop Chitambar's election upon the morale of the Church in India. He has been enthusiastically received in all sections of the Church, and by non-Methodists as well.

5. Indianization and Indigenous Leadership

1. One of the most significant results of Indian Nationalism is the desire on the part of Nationals to make the best use of Indian culture. There has been something akin to a renaissance in Indian art, literature, and customs. The Christian Church has also been influenced by this rediscovery of Indian culture, and demands have been made from every quarter that the life and worship of the Church be made more indigenous. Committees of the Central Conference of 1923 called upon the Methodist people to encourage Christian poets and writers to produce music and literature worthy of a place in the worship of the Church, to teach

¹*Discipline*, 1932, chap. xiv, sec. 231.

²*JGC*, XXXI, (1932), 712.

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Indian music in the schools and use Indian musical instruments and songs in the church service, and to build their church edifices along lines of Indian architecture.¹ The Episcopal Address of 1931 pointed out the significance of the necessity which confronted the Church to enter as fully as possible into the spirit of India's new day. This involves a deeper understanding of the new spirit of Indian aspirations, a wider use of indigenous methods, a better adaptation of western organic forms, and a fuller measure of India's genius devoted to the cause of Christ. The largest success can come only from the fullest co-operation between the Eastern and Western elements, methods and principles which are represented in the Church.²

2. An important phase of Indianization is in developing and employing indigenous leaders. This was the theme of an article by Bishop Fisher in 1921 under the title "Methodist in India—An Interpretation,"³ and was the emphasis of a large portion of the Episcopal Address in 1923. The latter devoted one section to a discussion of the "Indianization of the Church" and another to "Indianization—Church Development." After pointing out the fact that the Methodist Church had had remarkable success in the use of indigenous leadership, the Address added, "We most emphatically do not think for a moment we have gone far enough." There was still in various sections of the Church a low standard of leadership. The Church ought now to spend more money and make a much greater effort in finding and training leaders who can carry the load of responsibility.⁴ To the General Conference of 1924 Bishop Warne reported that "an outstanding feature of the work during the past four years has been the advanced places given to Indians."⁵ The Episcopal Address in 1928 reminded the Central Conference that "our task before us is to so prod and inspire our capable leaders as to cause them deliberately to push

¹MCC, 1923, p. 122.

²*Ibid.*, 1931, pp. 83 f.

³*Indian Witness*, March 23, 1921.

⁴MCC, 1923, pp. 51-53, *passim*.

⁵JGC, XIX (1924), 1049.

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aside old and inadequate methods, and to inaugurate new policies for themselves."¹ In 1931 the Executive Board declared:

The purpose and end of the entire program of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia is the establishment and continuance of a strong, self-supporting Indian Church. An essential factor in this program is an indigenous leadership, both lay and pastoral.²

The Episcopal Address of 1931 returned again to this all important topic. New responsibilities require a higher type of leadership. "Our times in India demand a higher type of training than was sufficient a decade or two ago." The early leaders of the Church set out to raise up Indian leaders, and now this Conference faced one more significant step in the development of an indigenous Church—the election of a Bishop to the episcopacy in India.³ The Central Conference of 1931 was itself something of a testimony to the progress made in Indian leadership. Of the sixty-four ministerial delegates, thirty-four were Nationals. Of the lay delegates an overwhelming majority were Nationals. It should be noted in contrast, however, that of the twenty-two delegates of the Women's Conferences, only four were Nationals. The Secretary of the Conference was a National, Professor N. K. Mukerjee.

A very significant development in the matter of indigenous leadership was the increasingly important place being assumed by the *Chaudhris*, or village head-men. A very thoughtful paper on the *Chaudhri* System as a means of developing religious leadership was contributed by Dr. M. T. Titus in the May 7, 1931, issue of the *Witness*, and Bishop J. W. Robinson reported the growth of the *Chaudhri* Movement to the General Conference of 1932.⁴

The Methodist Episcopal Church in India has thus been developing two types of indigenous leaders—those capable of assuming the most important and responsible places of leadership, and the simple unpaid village worker, the *chaudhri*. Next to the

¹MCC, 1928, p. 68.

²MEB, 1931, p. 35.

³MCC, 1931, pp. 83-86.

⁴JGC, XXXI (1932), 974.

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General Superintendent, there is probably no more important official in the Methodist Church than the District Superintendent. The North India Conference early took the step of placing districts under the supervision of Nationals, the first Indian Superintendent, Zahur-ul-Haqq, having been appointed only ten years after the foundation of the Mission. In 1935 the majority of the superintendents in this Conference were Nationals, and even in the Bombay Conference, where the work was for so long among the English-speaking people, three of the five District Superintendents were Nationals.

In its report on the work in India the Laymen's Foreign Mission Enquiry stressed the importance of indigenous leadership. This encouraged the Reverend E. M. Moffatt, Secretary of the Executive Board, to make a study of the progress in this matter in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The results of his study were published in the *Indian Witness* of March 2, 1933. He pointed out the fact that in 1933 one of the three bishops was a National, that while the Central Conference of 1920 had been only 32 per cent National that of 1931 was 61 per cent National, that while the ministerial membership of the Central Conference in 1920 had been only 27 per cent National that of 1931 was 63 per cent. In 1920 the Executive Board had been composed of twenty-seven members, all missionaries, but in 1932 of the forty-eight members, twenty-three, or 48 per cent, were Nationals. In 1920 the full membership of the Annual Conferences had been 63 per cent National, while in 1931 it had become 81 per cent National. In 1932 forty-three of the seventy-seven District Superintendents were Nationals, or 56 per cent. The Finance Committees in 1932 were 54 per cent indigenous. The Finance Committee of the North India Conference in 1920 had been 28 per cent National. In 1934 it was 74 per cent. The total impression is that Nationals are playing an important rôle in the Church.

6. Church Union, Comity and Co-operation.

1. The history of the movement toward the union of the Protestant Churches in India deserves larger consideration than

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is possible in the present study. The history of the movement in South India has been treated by a number of writers,¹ and a study of the progress toward Church Union in North India has recently been made by Dr. Kenneth Parker.² The Methodist Episcopal Church in India has had little interest in the "South India Scheme," and because of its connectional relation with the Church in America has as yet been unable to commit herself completely to the proposals being made in North India. Her relations to the negotiations in North India should, however, be noted somewhat briefly.

There was presented to the Central Conference of 1928 a statement on Church Union from the General Assembly of the United Church of Northern India,³ which opened with the preamble:

Believing that through organic union, wherever possible, not only will the desired co-operation between the various branches of the Church of Christ in India be more effectively secured, but a stumbling-block be removed and an approach be made to that visible unity which our Lord desired, we wish to bring this subject of Church Union before your Conference.

The statement then noted that differences of organization would need to be adjusted, but no real sacrifice would be demanded of either side. The world-wide connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church was highly appreciated, but many bodies in the United Church of Northern India had retained their ties with parent Churches and there was no reason why the Methodists might not also. In some parts of India the Methodists

¹Especial mention might be made of: Clifford Manshardt, "Movements Toward Church Union in South India" (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1924); "Movements Toward Church Union in South India," *Journal of Religion*, November, 1926, and the same title in the same Journal, January, 1929, and October, 1929; E. H. M. Waller, *Church Union in South India* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929).

²Kenneth Parker, "Growth of the United Church of Northern India" (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1935).

³In 1924 the United Church of Northern India had been formed by the union of the churches associated with twelve different Presbyterian Missions with Congregational churches of the American Board.

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and members of the United Church were working side by side, and while co-operation had been possible, the work of the Kingdom would be strengthened by union. The United Church then called upon the Methodist Church to "enter upon an earnest and business-like consideration of the question whether the Christian Church would not more worthily fulfil the purpose of her existence by making her organization, as far as practical, a real embodiment of unity."¹

The Episcopal Address had already called the attention of the Central Conference to the fact that there were strong movements at work in India looking toward the union of all the Christian Churches. Bitter persecution by the non-Christians was drawing the Christians of all sects together. The motives of education, of economic employment, and of social intercourse led the various Christian groups to believe that in consolidation they would find a richer and more abundant life.² The same address noted in another connection that the implication was sometimes rather painfully expressed that Methodists were suffering from a denominational complex. Whether this was true or not the Church must be sufficiently free from Methodist bias to permit a flexible adaptation to India's needs.³ At the same Conference a paper was read by the Reverend C. B. Hill on "The Methodist Episcopal Church and Reunion in India." This traced the history of union movements and discussed the relation of Methodists to the proposals. It advised caution in entering into negotiations with other bodies.⁴ As a consequence of these addresses, the Central Conference resolved,

That we ask our Bishops to appoint a Commission of nine to consult but not negotiate, with the United Church of India, North; and that a similar Commission be appointed by the Bishops to consult but not to negotiate with the South India

¹MCC, 1928, p. 94.

²*Ibid.*, p. 64.

³*Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 23. The full text of the paper is printed in the *Indian Witness*, February 22, 29, and March 7, 1928,

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United Church. These Commissions to report at the next Central Conference.¹

The Executive Board meeting in February, 1930, authorized a letter to the Convenor of the Church Union Committee of the United Church of Northern India expressing deep interest in all proposals for Church Union, but pointing out the fact that the relation of the Methodist Church in India to that in America made it necessary for all proposals to be subjected to detailed examination by the Central and General Conference.²

In 1929 a Round Table Conference on Church Union had been held in Lucknow at which Methodist representatives were present. A year later a second Round Table Conference was held in Delhi. The latter was attended by two delegates from the United Church of South India. But neither of these Round Table Conferences had been prepared to accept the South India view of the Historic Episcopacy. Following the Second Round Table Conference there was a Joint Meeting of committees representing the United Church of Northern India, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the English Baptists. The results of these meetings were reported to the Central Conference of 1930-31 in the Episcopal Address.³

The Central Conference itself adopted the resolutions proposed by its Commission on Church Union to the effect,

I. That the three Churches represented at the Joint Meeting in Delhi be recognized as united in faith in and devotion to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour; and that the purpose be declared to overcome the difficulties of organization that now keep us from corporate union in one Church.

II. That approval be given to the proposal for setting up

¹MCC, 1928, p. 24.

²MEB, 1930, p. 10.

³MCC, 1931, pp. 93 f. The actions of this meeting are recorded in the *Report of the Joint Meeting of the Church Union Committee of the United Church of Northern India, the Methodist Episcopal Church Commission on Church Union, and Representatives of the Baptist Church Union Committee, held in the Methodist Episcopal Church, Delhi, from Friday, 21st, till Monday, 24th November, 1930* (Pamphlet, no date, no publisher). The Resolutions of the Delhi Round Table Conference are printed as an Appendix in the foregoing.

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a Joint Council and that ten members of the Council be elected by the Central Conference.

III. That the Joint Council be requested to arrange for the appointment of a joint Consultative Commission to consider the relations of the Missionary Societies and the Churches which they represent.

IV. That the Joint Council be requested to prepare a simple statement of doctrine to witness to and safeguard the faith the Church has ever held in Jesus Christ.

V. That the principle of comprehension already in force in this Church in regard to the sacraments be recommended to the Joint Council as providing a *modus operandi* for including in one Church those who believe in the baptism of infants and in a choice of modes (immersion, sprinkling or pouring) and those whose belief limits the sacrament of baptism to believers and the mode of immersion.

VI. That the proposed Joint Council be given advisory powers in every realm of common interest and that the Executive Board, the several Councils and all other organizations of our Church in Southern Asia be advised to give sympathetic and careful consideration to any recommendations the Joint Council may make to them.

VII. That the Joint Council be informed that the Central Conference attaches great importance to the security of appointment enjoyed by the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the corresponding assurance to the Churches of having pastoral service of a minister of proved character and ability and consider it necessary that these values be thoroughly safe-guarded in any plan of union.

VIII. That the Joint Council be advised that the Central Conference recommends that careful attention be given to the need of ministers of the Church being given assurance of retirement allowances and for financial assistance for needy widows and minor orphaned children of their number who die while in active service or in the retired relation.¹

Upon the recommendation of its Committee on Temporal Economy the General Conference of 1932 approved and endorsed the statement of the Central Conference and the appointment of the Joint Council.²

The Joint Council thus authorized has held two meetings, in December, 1931, and February, 1935. A meeting of the Execu-

¹MCC, 1931, p. 72 f.

²JCC, 1932, p. 691.

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tive Committee occurred in April, 1934. Previous to the Council meeting in 1931 there had been held an All-India Conference on Church Union, at Nagpur, from November 7 to 9, 1931. This Conference was held in accordance with a resolution passed by the Round Table Conference held in Delhi in November, 1930. This conference urged greater efforts at co-operation, and proposed that careful study be made of differences in polity and ministries with a view to resolving difficulties. It was frankly admitted that the United Church of Northern India contained churches which were not prepared to accept the Historic Episcopate as a form of supervision.¹

The First Meeting of the Joint Council was held at Allahabad, December 2 to 4, 1931. Reports of actions taken by the participating Bodies were heard, and then attention was given to the reports and recommendations of the four committees: On Polity and Organization. On the Doctrinal Standards and the Sacraments. On the Ministry, and On Relations with Missions, Mission Boards and Churches abroad. Resolutions urging co-operation in publishing interests, educational institutions, and programs of evangelism and social service were adopted.²

On April 17 and 18, 1934, the Executive Committee of the Joint Council met at Lucknow. Resolutions were adopted approving a Certificate for transfer of membership between the negotiating bodies, mutually recognizing each others ministries, expressing the desirability of a union publication, and appointing a committee to prepare forms of worship to be used jointly. The four Standing Committees reported progress.³

The Second Meeting of the full Joint Council took place at Allahabad, from February 27 to March 1, 1935. A Doctrinal

¹*All-Indian Conference on Church Union Held in Nagpur, November 7-9, 1931* (Pasumalai: A. M. Lenox Press, 1931)

²*Report of First Meeting, Joint Council of the United Church of Northern India. The Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia, and the Churches associated with the Baptist Missionary Society* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1932).

³*Minutes of the Executive Committee held at Lucknow, April 17-18, 1934* (Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1934).

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Standard was approved which contains a preamble and ten articles. Article VII, on the Sacraments, leaves freedom to the individual to determine particular questions regarding the mode and subjects of Baptism. It was agreed that the problems of Polity and Organization are not likely to prove formidable. A series of church courts were approved, and the title "bishop" was retained for the superintendent of territorial areas. The bishop, however, will be of the same "order" as other ministers, and will be amenable to a General Assembly. The Ministry will be of two types, ordained and lay. There will be one Order, that of the Elder or Presbyter. A variety of lay workers will be recognized. Regarding the relation of the United Church to Missions, Mission Boards and Churches abroad no clear statement was formulated.¹

A voluminous correspondence on the subject of Church Union has been carried on through the pages of the *Indian Witness*. The editor has attempted to print and comment on that which especially concerns the Methodist Episcopal Church. This material would be invaluable to one making a study of the "environment" in which the Joint Council has been carrying on its work.²

2. Although the Methodist Episcopal Church in India has not yet entered into organic union with other bodies in India she has been in active co-operation in matters of comity. In 1925 a long-standing misunderstanding between the United Free Church of Scotland Mission and the Methodists concerning work in Nagpur was settled.³ The Executive Board in 1931 reported that there were very few cases in which Methodist work overlapped that of another Church.⁴ The General Conference of

¹While the official Minutes of this meeting are not yet (*i. e.* August, 1935) available the actions of the Council are reported by the Secretary in the *Indian Witness*, March 14, 1935.

²Note especially articles in the *Witness* of: September 7, 1921; February 22, 29, March 7, 1928; January 8, November 19, December 10, 1931; February 15, 22, March 1, 22, 1934; May 31, December 20, 1934; March 14, April 25, 1935.

³*MEB*, 1925, pp. 38-40; 1926, pp. 33-37.

⁴*Ibid*, 1931, p. 19.

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1932 authorized the Central Conference to enter into agreements with other Churches or Missions for the division of territory or of responsibility for Christian work within the territory of the Central Conference.¹ In September, 1929, the work of the Methodist Church in Baluchistan was turned over to the Christian and Missionary Alliance.² The Central Conference gave permission to the Hyderabad Conference to transfer the Yelandu field to the Church Missionary Society.³ And in 1931 the work in the Tuticorin field was transferred to the United Church of South India.⁴

A committee of the Board of Foreign Missions reported in 1925 a number of enterprises in India with which the Methodist Church was co-operating,⁵ and since that date the efforts toward Church Union have disclosed other avenues of co-operation into which the Methodists have entered. The leaders of India's Nationalist Movement have discovered from sad experience the futility of a program of non-co-operation. Of recent times they have tried to urge upon the people the need of unity and co-operation in a common cause. The leaders of the Christian Church in India have caught the same spirit and are now insisting that Western denominational prejudices must go, and the Christian forces of India must be united in a great common cause. In this they have the hearty support of the great majority of missionaries, who are as anxious as they to see unity—organic union it may be—consummated between the various Christian bodies at work in India. They desire the Church of Christ in India to become "self-propagating, self-directing, self-supporting," and thoroughly Indian!

¹*JGC*, 1932, p. 706.

²*JBFM*, 1929, pp. 86-90.

³*MCC*, 1931, p. 71.

⁴*JBFM*, 1930, pp. 119-21; 1931, p. 136.

⁵*Ibid.*, 1925, pp. 140, 155.

CHAPTER VII

The Missionary Policy in India of the Methodist Episcopal Church

STRICTLY speaking, the Methodist Episcopal *Church* had no missionary policy in India for the first fifty or sixty years of its history. Until the past fifteen or twenty years, the determination of policy has been largely in the hands of individual leaders. Broadly, there have been four periods in Methodist policy-making. During the first period (1856-1864) William Butler laid the foundations and determined the early structure of the Methodist work. He was encouraged and assisted by the Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society, Dr. Durbin. But in those days, as in even later ones, the Missionary Society had little part in policy-making. Its task was to supply the funds. Butler's policy was one of concentration and of paternalism. The second period (1864-1900) was dominated by the personalities of Thoburn, Taylor, Parker, and Waugh. The policy of this era was rapid expansion, none too careful observance of rules of comity, and stirring appeals to home churches for special gifts. The Missionary Society struggled manfully to raise the necessary money, but seems to have exerted little influence in policy-making. It is true that one of its secretaries did hold out inducements which brought to a close the Taylor scheme of self-support in South India.

The third period (1900-1920) was under the leadership of such stalwarts as J. E. and J. W. Robinson, F. W. Warne, B. H. Badley, and F. B. Price. Theirs was a policy of cautious expansion as far as entrance into new territory was concerned, but of wide open doors to the Mass Movements. Education was stressed. Self-support was encouraged. It was during this period that the Central Conference began to assume a place of importance in policy-making. Still the Board of Foreign Missions and the General Conference had only minor parts in determining the policies and programme of Indian Methodism other than in matters

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financial. It is true that the General Conference did concern itself from time to time with the question of Episcopal Supervision, spending considerable energy in discussing the pros and cons of the Missionary Episcopacy.

The fourth period opened with the Centenary Movement (1920). Under the inspiration of Centenary hopes, the General Conference of 1920 sent seventeen General Superintendents to the foreign field, giving India four bishops. But part of the confusion and disaster of the post-Centenary days was due to the fact that through long years the Board of Foreign Missions had really played so small a part in helping formulate policies for the numerous mission fields. The Board was able during the Centenary to raise and pour into foreign countries large sums of money, but it was not prepared to counsel wisely as to the best expenditure of these vast amounts. Each mission field did what seemed wise in its own eyes, with the consequence that at the end of the period the Board found itself hopelessly in debt. The "long distance control" of which Paul Hutchinson speaks,¹ had broken down under such an emergency as this. The result was that there was a change of administration at the next General Conference (1924).² And with the coming of the Edwards-Diffendorfer regime there may be said to have begun a new day in Methodist Foreign Missions. The Board of Foreign Missions immediately began to take a hand in policy-making with the result that the Church in India, so long accustomed to making her own plans, found herself puzzled and often annoyed by the interest and activities of the Board of Foreign Missions. The last period has been, therefore, largely one of efforts to become adjusted to a somewhat dual control in the affairs of the Indian Church. The situation was complicated by the fact that the General Conference of 1924 also gave to the Central Conference larger powers

¹Paul Hutchinson, *The Next Step* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1922).

²See RBFM, "Report of the Corresponding Secretaries" for years 1918-1924; JGC, 1920, sections on Episcopacy and Centenary; R. E. Diffendorfer, *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Chicago: Methodist Book Concern, 1923).

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than ever before.¹ A brief survey of the actions of the Board of Foreign Missions since 1924 will indicate how large a part that body has had in policy-making in India.

1. Significant Actions of the Board of Foreign Missions

The important decisions of the Board of Foreign Missions which have most vitally affected policies in India have, since 1924, grown principally out of the Reports of the Corresponding Secretaries and the recommendations of the Committee on Policy and Program.

The Corresponding Secretaries announced to the Annual Meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions in 1924 that a New Day for Foreign Missions had dawned. A re-study of the Missionary Program of the Methodist Episcopal Church should be undertaken. The secretaries had, therefore, prepared a list of questions through which some principles for the adjustment of program might be determined. These questions were sent to the missionaries and bishops in every Annual Conference outside of the United States. The Annual Meeting appointed a special committee to study the policies and methods of operation and work in the foreign field.²

In 1925 the Board of Foreign Missions appointed a Commission of Ten "to make a careful study of all the mission fields and projects" being conducted by the Board of Foreign Missions. A list of six items was given as the basis of reference for the Commission. The Board also gave its approval to the proposal that the Methodist Church take over the work of the London Missionary Society in Almora, North India.³

The visit of the Commission of Ten was a procedure almost unheard of in Methodist Episcopal Missions. After spending several months in India, the Commission through its secretary, Dr. Diffendorfer, issued an invitation to Methodist Missionaries and Nationals in India to gather for a consultative conference in

¹*Discipline*, 1924, chap. iv, par. 95.

²*JBFM*, 1924, pp. 29, 61 f.

³*Ibid.*, 1925, pp. 33, 60 f.

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Asansol in Bengal, January 17-24, 1927. The results of this conference were far-reaching both in India and in America. The findings of the conference were embodied in a report, "The Missionary Policy in India of the Methodist Episcopal Church."¹

The Board of Foreign Missions received the report and recommendations of the Commission of Ten on India at its meeting in November, 1927.² In 1929, the Corresponding Secretaries called to the attention of the Board the development in the movement toward Church Union in India and requested that consideration be given to the question as to what policy the Board should have toward continuing its financial support in the event the Methodist Church should join the Union. They also called attention to the intense nationalistic struggle taking place in India and pointed out the effects of this upon the work of the Church.³

Considerable agitation resulted in India when, in 1927, the Board recommended that the work in Baluchistan should be closed. The Central Conference hesitated in agreeing to the withdrawal of workers from this area, but the Board of Foreign Missions pointed out that "the Board has the legal right, after due consideration with the field, to negotiate for the purchase and sale of properties involving its own funds." In 1929, Bishop Robinson cabled to the Board, "Unconvinced wisdom legitimacy Boards Baluchistan proposals, however, continued disagreement harmful. Proceed. Cable full instructions. India co-operates.-- Robinson." And the work was closed.⁴

This was the beginning of the policy of the Board to recommend that some work be transferred to other Missionary Societies and that other work be closed. In 1930, the Board recommended to the Burma Annual Conference that the work in Burma be transferred to the Baptists, and to the South India Conference that the Tamil work in the Tuticorin Field be handed

¹*The Missionary Policy in India of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Lucknow: Methodist Publishing House, 1927). Cited hereafter as *Missionary Policy*.

²*JBFM*, 1927, pp. 46-52, 62-65.

³*Ibid.*, 1929, pp. 75-78, 79-82.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 86-89.

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over to the South India United Church.¹ The closing of the work in Burma was strongly protested, but immediate steps were taken to arrange for the transfer of the Tamil work.²

The Corresponding Secretaries in 1930 brought a number of other matters to the attention of the Board which had vital relation to the work in India. They recommended a careful study of the relation of the Board of Foreign Missions to the Central Conferences, to which larger powers had been given. They also reported the formation of The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry in which the Methodist Episcopal Church would take part. The significant findings of the Conference of Methodist Laymen on "The Future of Foreign Missions" were also reported. The Secretaries discussed at some length, in their report, the relation of the recommendations of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council to Methodist work in India, and closed with the challenge that the Methodist Church should formulate a new Missionary policy.³

In 1931, the Committee on Policy and Program of the Board, at the suggestion of the Corresponding Secretaries, again recommended a careful study of the relation of the Board to Central Conferences. In 1930, the Board had sent a letter to the Central Conference in India, meeting in December of that year, recommending that certain actions be taken. Among these were proposals to close the work in Burma, the consideration of the question as to whether missionaries should not retain their Conference relationship in American Annual Conferences, and the request that a Council of Co-operation be appointed as an agency between the Church in India and the Board of Foreign Missions. The Central Conference expressed itself as strongly opposed to the first two of these suggestions. In view of these and other actions of the Central Conference the Secretaries urged a careful study of the whole question of relationship.⁴

¹*JBFM*, 1930, pp. 14, 25, 117.

²*MCC*, 1931, pp. 71 f.

³*JBFM*, 1930, pp. 22-24, 76-80, 92-104, 118-21.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1931, pp. 27, 85-89.

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Two other important matters concerning the Church in India came to the attention of the Board of Foreign Missions in 1931. The first of these was the Report of the Joint Survey Committee in Southern Asia, which had been appointed by the Central Conference in 1930. This report received the hearty approval and commendation of the Board. The second matter was a Report by Assistant Treasurer Sutherland concerning Field Debts. The Board adopted a "pay as you go policy," in order to secure "a debtless mission field" and determined to practice that policy vigorously and consistently in connection with every action that it took.¹

In 1932, the Corresponding Secretaries again brought to the attention of the Board the problem of its relationship to the Central Conference. The problem of exercising wise supervision and yet avoiding the assumption of responsibility for the details of local administration was a difficult one. The policy of the Board was to do all that was possible to encourage indigenous leadership. The Secretaries also reported that a questionnaire had been sent to all Field Finance Committees concerning progress in self-support, the possibility of the disposal of unnecessary property, and the allocation of missionary personnel.²

Under the inspiration of the publishing of the report of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry the Corresponding Secretaries called upon the Board to "re-think" its missionary program. Twelve problems suggested by the Laymen were proposed as a basis for the study of Methodist Missionary policy and program. Concerning adjustments of the program in India the Secretaries recommended the adoption of the resolution of the Committee on Policy and Program that approval be given to the intensive development of missionary effort in the following regions:

- (1) Mass Movement Areas in North India, Northwest India and Lucknow Conferences; (2) Lahore and the Indus River Valley; (3) Gujarat; (4) Hyderabad Telugu Work;

¹*JBFM*, 1931, pp. 89-93, 145-210.

²*Ibid.*, 1932, pp. 72-75, 82 f.

³*Ibid.*, 1933, pp. 89-92, 128 f.

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(5) a Restricted Kanarese Block; (6) Jubbulpore and the Bastar State.

It was further voted that the remainder of the work in Southern Asia be subject to further consideration, in consultation with the Bishops and the Field Finance Committees.¹

This resolution was sent early in the year, with a covering explanatory letter to the three Bishops in India, urgently requesting that they secure consideration by the Field Finance Committees and any other groups concerned, in the fields under question. The Interim Committee of the Executive Board, meeting at Naini Tal, on June 27-28, reviewed these communications, and took favorable action. At a meeting of the Interim Committee in Muttra on September 12, 1934, the Bishops reported that their replies to these communications had been forwarded to the Board. The Committee on Policy and Program, on October 17, reviewed these letters and resolutions. Following a prolonged discussion of a possible comprehensive Christian approach to India, upon the recommendation of the Committee, the Board of Foreign Missions adopted this significant resolution :

1. We . . . express our appreciation to the Bishops and other members of the Ad Interim Committee and to the various Annual Conferences and the Field Finance Committees in India for the consideration of our proposals growing out of the Board's action of a year ago, and note with interest that they have provided a way, whereby a more concentrated and a more efficient organization of our work can be realized.

2. It is the judgment of the Committee on Policy and Program that the problems of readjustment, now facing not only our own Board but the whole missionary enterprise, are so great and so urgent that any isolated consideration of these problems to-day by a single missionary agency or Church field body must be entirely inadequate.

3. The whole approach of evangelical missions to India—as to other countries—and the whole program of expansion of the various Christian Churches, would appear to call for constructive, forthright and fearless reconsideration. The programs of other days and their continuation for the days ahead will not suffice. The argument for maintenance of the Meth-

¹*JBFM*, p. 86.

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odist *status quo* surely does not exhaust the resources of available statesmanship. All the evangelical forces at work in a given geographical or language area, just as far as possible, should reckon together with their common problems and should seek to use their funds, their personnel, and their present or potential institutions to the largest spiritual and social ends for the good of India and for the extension of the Kingdom of God in that sub-continent of many races, languages and faiths.

4. Where hesitation prevails on the part of one or another section or group among the Christian forces, this should not prevent the remaining agencies from working together for the largest possible united or correlated program. It might seem good to maintain all existing work for the sake of the people of particular districts or communities, and yet the very inertia of the present conditions or situations might thus defeat notable advance in the large.

5. Because of the strength, the experience and strategic position of Methodist forces in some areas, special responsibility may rest upon these forces in these particular areas, for initiative in the direction of winning the various Christian Agencies to a larger strategy.

6. In other areas the primary responsibility for initiative may in the nature of the case rest upon other Christian bodies.

7. In still other regions, the Methodists may discover in certain non-Methodist groups the vision, the temper, and the administrative readiness fully to share in the planning of a common advance. This advance, however initiated, and with whatever measure of inclusiveness, should pertain to the ultimate permeation of all India by the leaven of Christian ideals and of far-reaching Christian service. We are eager that the Methodist forces should under no circumstances be hesitant in respect to such united advance. Our total resources and assets should be utilized in the closest possible relation to those of others in meeting these vast opportunities in India to-day.

8. This Committee, even in the face of a lessened staff and of limited funds, is unwilling to accept the present front of our Methodist forces and work in India as necessarily the best deployment of our personnel and the best adjustment of our institutions to the total problem and task.

9. The testimony of a number of notable objective studies recently made in India is too explicit, the impressions received by various Methodist observers are too strong, and the present temper of the Methodist giving constituency in the United

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States is too unmistakable, for us to take any other position than this.¹

The Board of Foreign Missions, in 1934, gave its hearty approval to the recommendation made by J. W. Pickett concerning Mass Movements in India.²

This rapid survey of the significant actions of the Board of Foreign Missions will indicate how large a place the Corresponding Secretaries and the Board have had in determining missionary policies for the Methodist Church in India since 1924. The leaders of the Church in India have not always fully understood the spirit or the purpose of some of the actions taken by the Board, but we believe that in a short while there will be a larger amount of harmony and co-operation between the policy-makers in India and in America. Upon the working out of harmonious relationships between these two bodies a great deal depends.

2. Administration.

1. In recent days Methodist leaders have made much of the fact that in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India no separation exists between Church and Mission. Theoretically this is so, but actually the ideal has not been entirely achieved, as we shall show later. There seems to be no evidence that there was a conscious policy from the beginning to avoid a distinction between Church and Mission. For the first eight years the work was definitely called the "Methodist Mission," and even after the Annual Conference was organized the leaders continued to speak of the "Mission." Early Methodists simply brought over to India the ecclesiastical forms with which they were familiar and they worked well in India, as they had done on the American frontiers where they had been created.

But Methodist leaders in India early adopted the policy of making Methodist Episcopal organization flexible and adaptable. They admitted Nationals into Conference membership on the same basis as Americans and Europeans. They developed the

¹*JBFM*, 1934, pp. 70-74, 112-34.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 70, 109-12.

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types of preachers known as "Local Preachers" and "Exhorters." They organized the District Conference to care for the supervision of these workers who were not qualified for Annual Conference Membership. They organized a Central Conference to co-ordinate the work of the Annual Conferences which soon grew up in various parts of India. They elected Nationals as District Superintendents, and worked earnestly toward the election of a National Bishop.

The question as to whether the Methodists in India have a Mission or not has been a vexing one. In the Episcopal Address of 1931, Bishop Badley denied that there was any distinction between "Church" and "Mission."¹ The Asansol Conference also noted the fact that the Methodist emphasis has been laid upon the Church rather than upon a Mission and gave certain suggestions that might help in the realization of the goal of building the Indian Church.² The "Fact Finders" of the Laymen's Missions Inquiry also pointed out the fact that the Methodists had been Church-minded, but they believed that this policy, however, should be described as an attempt to organize churches rather than to develop churches.³

Occasionally, Methodist leaders have been frank enough to admit that within the Methodist Church in India there is a form of Mission. The Asansol Conference said:

Unfortunately we have ourselves adopted the designation "Methodist Mission" or "M. E. Mission" in our general conversation, but this does not represent our real thought. Theoretically we have a Church organization and no Mission at all. Our practice is behind our theory. We have several groups that in effect, form mission groups within the church body.

The report then shows in what manner the Field Finance Committee, the Executive Board, the Woman's Conference, and

¹MCC., 1931, p. 84.

²*Missionary Policy*, p. 92.

³*Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry Fact-Finders' Reports, India-Burma*, Vol. IV, Supplementary Series (New York: Harper and Bros., 1933), p. 232.

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the Field Reference Committee of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society are, in reality mission groups within the Church.¹

The editor of the *Indian Witness*, in the issue of January 29, 1931, admits that in a very real sense there does exist in the Methodist organization the elements that constitute a "mission" as well as those that constitute a church. He adds, "We believe that there is real need for us to recognize this fact and bring it into active play in our administration." In the same magazine, on October 29, 1931, R. T. Templin raised the question, "Are we a Mission or a Church?" and answered that for this present generation Indian Methodism must be both. The writer thought that Methodists must exaggerate the Mission and foreign in their enterprise as they had never done before. In this way ill feeling will be avoided. Indians will not desire places in the "Mission" and missionaries will not strive for places in the "Church." Work of mission and missionaries must be considered temporary. Permanent places in the Church should be filled by Indians as quickly as possible. If a missionary has a position in the Church, he must be acceptable to the Church and must receive the position as a Church member.

Probably the most graphic discussion concerning the mission and church relationship in Indian Methodism was that contributed by the Reverend William Dye under the title "The 'Mission' of the Mission," appearing in the *Indian Witness* of September 15, 1932. Certain portions of this article are worthy of quotation :

It is a disquieting fact that in our great North India field, where Christians are numbered by the hundred thousand, the vast organization is still essentially a mission—mission-centered, mission-supported and mission-controlled; and, what is more disturbing, developing within itself thoroughgoing mission attitudes and mentality.....The undue extension and perpetuation of the "mission" organization and control has certainly had serious disadvantages. 1. It has practically eliminated responsibility between preacher and people (where it ought to be) and placed it between preacher and superintendent (where it doesn't need to be) with the inevitable result that the bond between preacher and people is sometimes

¹*Op. cit.*, pp. 89 f.

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peculiarly loose.....2. It has fostered a Mission mentality, by which I mean an attitude that looks steadily to foreign money to carry on the Lord's work.....3. It has resulted in vast clouds of unreality. While theoretically everything is 'Church' and is, in fact, so organized, in reality practically all is 'mission'; and the task of disentangling the one from the other is urgent indeed; the elaborate church superstructure that has been erected is rendered largely artificial because the base on which the whole pyramid rests is foreign money.....4. It has hindered progress. Local initiative and efforts are crippled in advance where the missions carry all responsibilities.....It is obvious that the restoration of self-support to its proper place and the separation of church from mission is no easy task; it touches foundations rather than the superstructure. Yet, whatever the cost, the elimination of the unreality that pervades so much of our work will be sheer gain.....

We would suggest two things: First, that the acid test of self-support be applied as quickly as our faith and courage will allow; secondly, that a group of outstanding Indians be asked to work out, in consultation with a few missionaries, the tangled problem of church and mission. Let all that possibly can be handed over to the Indian church with the understanding that foreign monetary help will be withdrawn within a short specified period. Should the Church request missionary help for any purpose, let it be given; but let the missionaries be at the appointment and control of the Church. Probably in such a process the Church will shrink to very small proportions, but what is left will be the real thing and well on the way to freedom, health and growth. The readjustments that are necessary will be difficult for both missionaries and Indians. The former will find it hard to keep his hands entirely off the work recognized as that of the Church, while the Indian will find it equally hard to reorganize the Church on the basis of indigenous resources. But let it be remembered that money is one of the least of the Church's resources. Courage, devotion, self-sacrifice and the faith that boldly says 'Our sufficiency is of God' are infinitely greater. It may be that we shall discover the Indian Church to be far richer in such true riches than we ever dreamed, and that with the clarifying of the present tangle there will be many who will come forward to serve their Lord with true Indian abandon and self-sacrifice in a way they have never felt free to do before.

To the present writer it would seem a wise procedure for the Methodist Church in India to admit frankly the fact that all the problems relating to Missions and Church have not been solved, and to set itself courageously to the task of "untangling the

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tangle." As an editor of the *Witness* has pointed out, whenever a congregation has a pastor supported by funds from "outside," it is a "mission." A "church" supports its own pastor. Our suggestion would be that the Methodist Church in India call together a conference, similar to the one held in Asansol in 1927, where the missionary policies of the Church for the next decade may be worked out. Missionaries and Nationals, representatives of the Church and of the Board of Foreign Missions, should sit down together and discuss carefully the various relationships existing in the Indian Church—the relationship between Missionary activities and Church activities, between the Indian Church and the Church in America, between the Missionary and the National.

From time to time new policies for making the work more effective have been suggested by Methodist leaders. The Reverend A. L. Grey in the *Indian Witness* of May 25, 1921, proposed that the size of some of the districts be reduced, the best men among the Indian ministers be appointed as superintendents, and a resident missionary be appointed for groups of from two to five districts to cultivate Special Gifts and to be a general helper both of the Board of Foreign Missions and of the superintendents of the group of districts. This policy, the writer thought, would release several missionaries for evangelistic and educational work and would develop indigenous leadership more rapidly. It would also tend to create a better spirit among Missionaries and Nationals as the Missionaries turned over district responsibilities to Nationals. It was proposed that the resident missionary should have nothing to do with the finances of the district. For the purpose of handling finance there might be two Finance Committees in each Conference—one for the work of the Board of Foreign Missions and one for distributing its share of the appropriations of the Board as well as the funds raised locally.

The Asansol Conference suggested the simplification and adaptation of Methodist organization to suit local needs. The *panchayat* should be used more generally. To it should be given more voice in the handling of funds, by putting on it the responsibility of collecting and administering local funds.

Others have suggested that the district superintendency

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should be made more purely an ecclesiastical office and the superintendent should be Relieved of the Responsibility of the supervision of educational policies and other institutional matters. It has been proposed in this connection that the districts might be made smaller and the pastors of Central Churches might then act as district superintendents as well. Still others have thought that the individualism which has characterized Methodist Episcopal administration in India in the past should give way to control by responsible committees. District Superintendents have spent money, incurred debts, opened stations, bought property, engaged and dismissed workers, fixed salaries, and have done many other things on their own initiative without the advice or approval of Conferences or Finance Committees, with the result that the work in many sections is unbalanced, disintegrated, and often most inefficient. It is believed that this condition might be somewhat obviated by the use of district committees which would give continuity, permanency, and democracy to the missionary policies of the districts.

2. Reference was made in a previous section to the fact that the unusual part which the Board of Foreign Missions has begun to take in shaping Missionary policy in India has been a source of surprise and occasionally of annoyance to the leaders of the Church in India. The proposal of the Board to withdraw appropriations from Burma and to turn the work over to the Baptist brought forth vigorous protests from the Executive Board and the Central Conference. In 1930, the Executive Board, after reviewing the disciplinary regulations concerning the relation between the Board of Foreign Missions and a Central Conference,¹ resolved,

That, whenever the Board of Foreign Missions may consider that the Appropriations to any part of the work in such fields outside the United States should be withdrawn altogether, or that work in a given section should be closed or handed over to another Mission or Church, and its property sold, *It is requested* that, in harmony with the provisions noted above, the Board of Foreign Missions take no action, nor enter into any negotiations with any other Church or Mission with-

¹*Discipline*, 1928, para. 459, 1; para. 97, 2 (6).

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out the approval of the Central Conference or the Executive Board.¹

In 1931, the Episcopal Address to the Central Conference said, "We feel convinced that the present situation indicates the urgent need of such adjustment of function between the Church on the field and the Board in the homeland as will enable us to avoid like confusion in the future."² The Central Conference passed strong resolutions disapproving the proposal to withdraw from Burma and also rejecting the suggestion that missionaries retain their membership in Annual Conferences in America.³ In order to secure closer harmony between the Board and the Central Conference, it was proposed that a new article be inserted in the *Discipline* which would permit a Central Conference to have power to designate its Executive Board as a Council of Co-operation for the consideration of the policy and program of the Church, within the Central Conference territory, with reference to the property and funds of the Board of Foreign Missions and of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and for advising the Board and Society with reference to the same.⁴

The General Conference of 1932 adopted this proposal and also ordered that there be inserted in the Constitution of the Board of Foreign Missions the clause, that,

The Board of Foreign Missions shall make no fundamental decision with regard to the schools, churches, missions and social institutions of the M. E. Church in the foreign fields, or with reference to administration, policy and property matters connected therewith, until there has first been consultation with the resident Bishop and the Finance Committee of the Conference concerned.⁵

Concerning the nature of the Board of Foreign Missions, itself, two important suggestions have been made and should be recorded here. The first is that there should be several Nationals

¹MEB, 1930, p. 9.

²MCC, 1931, p. 96.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 71 f.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵JGC, 1932, P. 552.

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on the Board who would be able to interpret the desires of the foreign fields to the Board directly. The second suggestion is more revolutionary, namely, that the Board should be more decentralized and organized more on the basis of a Missionary Society. It is said that the Parent Board might learn something from the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society in the matter of the organization and cultivation of the home churches for the support of Foreign Missions.

In spite of the difficulties that have attended the effort to make adjustment to the new methods of the present Corresponding Secretaries of the Board, the evidence seems to justify the actions of the Board of Foreign Missions in taking a larger part in helping to shape missionary policies on the field. A study of the history of Methodism in India shows that there has been far too much individualism and uncorrelated planning in the past. Some phases of the work have been developed, in certain sections, all out of proportion to other phases. The Church in India has often been tempted to look upon herself as deserving special favour from the Church in America. It is well that there is some organization like the Board of Foreign Missions with world contacts which is able to help the churches in India, China, South America, etc. get a world-perspective. As long as the Church in India depends to such a large extent upon the Church in America for funds, it will be wise for the Board in co-operation with leaders on the field to have its part in determining missionary policies for the future.

As a rule, the proposals made by the Board in the past fifteen years have been far more radical than anything suggested on the field. But history will probably record the fact that in many of its proposals the Board was more nearly right than at first seemed the case. At any rate, the recommendations of the Committee on Policy and Program, made in 1934, deserve careful consideration by the Church in India.

In future policy-making, furthermore, the exact relation between the Board and the Indian Church must be more exactly defined.

3. With the growth of the powers of the Central Confer-

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ence in foreign fields the problem of the relation between the Church in Mission lands and in America has become acute. Shortly after the General Conference of 1920 had inserted paragraph 95, in Chapter IV of the *Discipline*—a chapter which has been described as the Magna Charta of the Methodist Church in foreign lands—three significant books appeared. The first of these by Dr. Paul Hutchinson, entitled *The Next Step*,¹ noted that the Methodist Episcopal Church alone, of all Protestant Churches has made the decision to disregard all national lines and to attempt to project its influence permanently as an international body. It was tending to become a World Church. It had been found, however, that the General Conference and Board of Foreign Missions were unable to direct the affairs of the Church at such long distance. The General Conference exerted tremendous power in determining the future of Methodist Churches abroad but was tremendously ignorant of the situation in those churches. The Board of Foreign Missions also exerts enormous influence upon the work, workers, and property in foreign lands. There is need for a more personal and close-contact direction—a direction that is part of the life that is directed. The General Conference of 1920 took a significant step toward the formation of the World Church when it wrote paragraph 95 into the *Discipline*. But even larger powers must be given to Central Conferences. Dr. Hutchinson proposes a radical reorganization of Methodism in which the General Conference will be composed of delegates elected by Central Conferences. The work in America should also be organized into a Central Conference. There should be international Boards of Missions, Education, Young Peoples' Work, etc. Each of these should contain representatives from all fields.

The work of Dr. Hutchinson was followed by one by Bishop Neely,² taking issue with Dr. Hutchinson and questioning the legality of the action of the General Conference of 1920 in appointing General Superintendents to residences in foreign fields.

¹Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, passim.

²Neely, *op. cit.*

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Bishop Neely had little sympathy with the idea of a World Church and proposed that the Methodist Churches in foreign lands be made independent bodies as quickly as possible.

This book of Bishop Neely's aroused Bishop F. B. Fisher to reply. His book, *Which Road Shall We Take?*¹ proposed to be a frank discussion of Methodist International Policy. He believed that two alternatives faced the Methodist Church: first, a world federation made up of geographically determined Central Conferences with vital and voting connections with the General Conference, and, second, a Church split and separated into a series of national units, not officially related one to the other. Bishop Fisher earnestly hoped that Methodism would take the road leading to the World Church.

Some time later, in the closing chapter of his book, *Hindustan's Horizons*,² Bishop B. T. Badley reviews the three works just mentioned and concludes that Methodism in India has reached a stage where the share she had in shaping her own course during the past no longer suffices. India's problems can never receive adequate consideration in a General Conference interested largely in the affairs of the American Church. Unless Methodism becomes a world-wide church in which India may have a reasonable part there is no alternative except an independent National Church such as had been formed in Japan.

Significant studies concerning the relationships between the Younger and Older Churches were made by the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council and by the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry.³ These should have the careful consideration of those to whom is entrusted the responsibility for framing the future missionary policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India.

¹F. B. Fisher, *Which Road Shall We Take? A Frank Discussion of Methodism's International Policy*. (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1923).

²B. T. Badley, *Hindustan's Horizons* (Calcutta: Calcutta Chromotype Co., 1923).

³*Younger and Older Churches*, Vol. III of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1928 (New York, 1928).

India-Burma, Vol. IV, Supplementary Series, Part II of the *Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry Fact-Finders' Report*, pp. 156-292.

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4. No problem is greater in the question of the relation of Younger and Older Churches than that of leadership. From almost the days of its foundation, the leaders of the Methodist Church in India have given attention to the matter of raising up an indigenous leadership. In the words of the Board of Foreign Missions,

Recognition of national leadership and participation in conferences, in finance committees, in the headships and staffs of schools, in the superintendence of the churches, has never brought challenge from this Board or its officers. On the other hand by personal and official influence the policy of transferring responsibility to the nationals, individuals or community, has been steadily advocated and promoted.¹

In the matter of devolution the Methodist Episcopal Church has not faced some of the difficult problems which have confronted other bodies in India, for her form of church polity makes it possible for nationals to assume places of responsibility and leadership as quickly as they are prepared for the same. Yet the criticism of the "Fact-Finders" that Indianization in the Methodist Church is more apparent than real should be given careful consideration.² In this connection, the recommendation of the second session of the National Christian Council of India in 1926 deserves careful study. Both the missionaries and the Nationals should have a clear idea as to what responsibilities have been transferred. It should be remembered, also, that the presence of even a large majority of Indians in the Conferences and on the Board of the Indian Church does not insure that Indian opinion influences vitally the actions of those bodies. And while many Methodists have expressed the opinion that the Methodist system of Church organization is ideal for India, they should consider carefully the suggestion that it is not a question as to whether Indian Christians are able to handle efficiently the machinery set up, but whether they are able to express their spiritual life to best advantage through the Methodist organization.³

¹*JGC*, 1924, pp. 1208 f.

²*Op. cit.*, p. 236.

³*Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the National Council, Calcutta*, November 6-11, 1926.

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The history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India reveals several trends in the matter of indigenous leadership. The Church has been successful in calling forth a large body of rather poorly trained men for work in the Mass Movement areas. She now faces the need to secure a higher type of ministry. Her future policy should be to use well-trained ministers, even though the total number of workers may be less than at present. Poorly trained men should be retired or dismissed as quickly as they can find other employment. In order to secure a finer type of man for her ministry, the Church must give a certain guarantee of continued service to those who prove satisfactory and of more sympathetic treatment of the younger minister on the part of his seniors.

The Asansol Conference gave careful thought to the question of the use of unpaid workers and concluded that the Church should reconsider her whole policy of employing paid evangelists. William Butler had unquestioningly adopted the policy of employing evangelists which he found in use in other missions. From time to time this policy was questioned by Methodist leaders.¹ The future policy of the Church should take into account the conclusion of the Asansol Conference that this system often makes the evangelist's message to non-Christians unreal, for his preaching is looked upon as only his attempt to earn his salary and not the conviction of his heart. The development of the *Chaudhri* Movement has been an effort to raise up an unpaid indigenous leadership. Yet experience has shown the Methodists that an unpaid ministry cannot be forced. It is only as Nationals volunteer for such service that the movement can become a success.

5. Under the impetus of the Nationalist Movement, Indian Methodists have been led to express their desire for a larger Indianization of the Church. The Asansol Conference pointed out the necessity of keeping the Church related to the social and political movements of the country. The attitude of the Christian Movement toward nationalism should be sincerely favorable. Efforts should be made to make the Methodist organization such

¹Messmore, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

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that it will be easier for an Indian Christian to become a Nationalist and for a Nationalist to become a Christian. The future policy of the Church must be based upon an India self-governing and for all intents and purposes independent. Village Christians should be encouraged to make every effort to erect places of worship suited to their environment.¹

The place of the missionary in the life of the Indian Church has created numerous problems. In 1931, the Indian members of the Central Conference adopted a resolution opposing the suggestion that missionaries withdraw their membership from the Annual Conferences of Southern Asia.² But while the Nationals have thus requested the missionaries to retain their membership in the Indian Church, they have made it quite clear that only missionaries of a certain type will be welcome in India. The missionary must make India his home, and the Indian people his people. He must work *with* India, not *for* India. In formulating policies for the future, it would be well to take into account the criticism of the "Fact-Finders" that the average missionary in the Methodist Conferences has been so preoccupied with administrative duties that he has not become familiar with the Indian religious and social structure and that Indian leaders have not been taught to appreciate the better elements in their own Indian heritage.³ While this criticism is probably too severe, it points out, nevertheless, that which has been a dangerous tendency in the Methodist organization.

3. Mass Movement Policies

The Mass Movements in various parts of India where the Methodist Church has been at work have largely influenced the missionary policy of Indian Methodism. The large accessions in the years between 1890 and 1920 due to Mass Movement conversions created a situation for which the church was unprepared. After a few years of hesitation the Methodist leaders adopted the policy of first baptising inquirers, and then attempting to train

¹ *Fact-Finders' Report*, pp. 19-21, 31.

² *MCC*, 1928, pp. 62 f.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 237 f.

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them in the essentials of Christianity. But pastors and teachers could not be raised up in sufficient quantity and quality to handle the situation adequately. Other Churches and Missions received Mass Movement converts with more caution, with the result that their accessions were not nearly so large as those of the Methodists. Perhaps only time will tell which of the two policies was wiser, but Dr. Pickett has not been so severe in his criticism of Methodist methods as earlier critics were inclined to be.¹

During the past fifteen years the Methodists have made earnest efforts to cope with the situation created by large Mass Movement accessions, and numerous proposals have been made by Methodist leaders. An article by Dr. H. J. Sheets in the *Witness* of November 2, 1921, entitled "The Problem of Our Nominal Christians," points out that of the 8,500 on the Church roll in the Bijnor District, very few were real Christians. This was partly due to the fact that the preachers who worked among them were paid to preach and their message was not heard. The Episcopal Address to the Central Conference of 1923 speaks of the abysmal ignorance of the vast mass of Methodists on spiritual matters, and points out that the condition is growing steadily worse because of the rapidity with which new converts are baptised and because of the lack of trained leaders to care for them.² The Mass Movement Commission of the Central Conference of 1923 presented eight recommendations for dealing with the Mass Movement problem.³ The growing caution of Methodist leaders toward the Mass Movements can be seen in the resolution of the Committee on the State of the Church in 1928, that previous to baptism, a more thorough course of instruction on the principles of Christianity should be given and that those seeking baptism be required to continue under instruction until they understand more fully the meaning of Christianity, and are willing to give up readily non-Christian rites. A list of suggestions for instructing those already baptised was given by the Committee.⁴

¹Pickett, *op. cit.*

²MCC, 1923, p. 58.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 72 f.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1928, p. 95.

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The study of the Mass Movement undertaken by Dr. Pickett, under the supervision of the National Christian Council, furnishes the most authentic data on conditions in the Methodist Mass Movement areas. His conclusions about Mass Movement work in general and the Methodist areas in particular are most significant. In criticising the Methodist policy in dealing with the Mass Movement he points out that in many sections loose administration prevails because the Christian community has exceeded the strength of the ministerial staff. Pastors in the United Provinces are severely handicapped by the fact that the Christian families are distributed over wide areas. Frequent changes in pastors, district-superintendents, and other supervising ministers have severely interfered with the administration of discipline. The Episcopal areas are so large and include such a variety of situations that the bishops have been unable to give careful personal supervision to local situations and unified programs have not been found practicable.¹

Dr. Pickett's study has had a very stimulating influence in awakening Methodist leaders to the necessity of formulating adequate policies for dealing with the Mass Movements. Numerous conferences have been held in which Methodists have participated, and it seems evident that they are determined to give serious consideration to the practical recommendations which Dr. Pickett has made. Representatives of the Hyderabad Conference met with Dr. Pickett in June, 1934, to consider the problems of their area.² During the summer of 1934, conferences were held in Landour, Naini Tal, and Kodaikanal, and many conferences were scheduled in various parts of the country during the winter months.³ A very stimulating article by Dr. Murray T. Titus appeared in the *Witness* of July 19, 1934, under the title, "Building the Village Church: Wanted, a Policy and Programme." This dealt with such problems as standards of Church membership, organization of the local church, and effective supervision.

¹Pickett, *op. cit.*, pp. 251 f., 255-57.

²*Indian Witness*, June 7, 1934.

³*Ibid.*, June 14, 1934.

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Further study of Dr. Pickett's recommendations will, no doubt, lead the Methodist Church to the formulation of sound policies for dealing with the Mass Movement work.

4. Church Finance.

The missionary policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India in the matter of finance has developed along four general lines: self-support, administration of funds, cultivation of Special Gifts, and a program for removing the large indebtedness on property in India.

1. Attention to the question of self-support found a place early in the history of Indian Methodism. Dr. Butler succeeded in securing large amounts in India for the support of his work.¹ This money, however, came largely from European and Anglo-Indian friends of the mission. Practically nothing was contributed by the indigenous Church. Dr. Butler's successors continued the effort to secure funds from European friends, but also inaugurated the policy of urging self-support upon the native Church. It was said of the Methodist leaders that they took up a collection on every possible occasion.² The ideal of self-support has, therefore, long been held before Indian Methodists. During the past few years, the emphasis upon self-support has been even more marked. The Episcopal Address of 1923 devoted considerable space to the subject.³ The Central Conference of 1928 appointed a special commission on Self-Support.⁴ The Asansol Conference recommended that it should be the definite aim of all Mass Movement groups to support their own pastor and teacher. The Central Conference of 1931 voted with regard to the ministry "that the basic principal be changed and that henceforth the beginning point of all our thinking in regard to the training of workers be that of training laymen and self-supporting and Church-supported ministers."⁵

¹J. E. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

²J. Wilkie, *Indian Witness*, February 21, 1907.

³MCC., 1923, p. 53.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1928, p. 96.

⁵*Ibid.*, 1931, p. 52.

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The *Indian Witness*, in 1932, printed two significant articles on the question of self-support. The first under the title "The 'Mission' of the Mission" by Reverend William Dye appeared in the issue of September 15. A report of the action of the Finance Committee of the North India Conference on Self-Support was printed in the *Witness* of October 20.

In 1934, the Reverend H. E. Wylie read a paper before the Landour Missionary Conference which created a stir of interest throughout Mission circles in India. Its title was "The Nevius Methods in Relation to Mass Movement work." The Nevius method advocates an unpaid ministry from the first, or one entirely supported by the native Christians. All work, evangelistic, educational, etc., is supported by Nationals. Only missionaries are supported by funds from America. This system has worked successfully in Korea and sections of China.¹ In the *Witness* of August 16, the Reverend A. G. Atkins reported that the reading of the paper by Mr. Wylie had led to a conference on the theme "Evangelism in India and the Nevius Method." A list of important questions concerning the application of this method to Indian situations was being sent to Dr. Clark, the author of a book on the Nevius method.² The reply of Mr. Clark was printed in the *Witness* of October 4, 1934. Careful consideration of the Nevius method of Self-Support should find a place in future missionary policies of the Methodist Church in India.

In spite of the fact that Methodist leaders have said much about Self-Support the "Fact-Finders" expressed the opinion that the Church had accomplished little in the matter. Tables and statistics are given in support of their criticism. Whether their judgment is correct or not, the fact remains that at present, owing to the successive cuts in the appropriations of the Board of Foreign Missions, the burden of self-support is being hurriedly piled on the shoulders of the Indian Church. Indian leaders are becoming discouraged by this procedure and the difficulty of securing a high type of leadership is becoming greater.

¹Reprinted in *Indian Witness*, August 2, 1934.

²C. A. Clark. *The Korean Church and the Nevius Methods* (New York Revell, 1930).

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2. Vitally related to the problem of Self-Support is the question of the wisest method of handling funds secured in India and those sent out from America. Until 1864, William Butler had complete control of the finances of the Mission. After the organization of the India Mission Conference, a finance committee was formed. For a number of years this was composed only of missionaries. Then Indians in increasing numbers were placed on conference finance committees. At the present time the majority of the members of the finance committees are Nationals. But the problems connected with the administration of church funds are far from being solved.

The Asansol Conference recommended that in regularly organized Central Churches, where self-support has not yet been achieved, grants-in-aid from the Mission Board should be transferred to and administered by the local Boards of Stewards.¹ A most thoroughgoing study of the question of the administration of Mission funds was made by the Jerusalem Conference. The effects of their recommendation are gradually making themselves felt in all mission fields.

The Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry volume, *Re-thinking Missions*,² also recommended that mission boards specify a short period of annually decreasing subsidies for most of the churches now receiving them and that at the end of the specified period foreign subsidies cease altogether as a method of supporting churches. It is interesting to note that at least one voice was raised in protest against the method of "decreasing grants." In an article in the *Witness* of October 27, 1931, the Reverend C. B. Stuntz says that this is simply the method of "cut" and is wrong. Workers continue to hope for a restoration of the "cut." This produces a bad psychology, depression, and discouragement. He proposes the plan used by the United Presbyterians in the Pasrur District, in which a single village congregation is selected as a unit of work. The District Superintendent will spend several weeks or a month with this unit. A pastor will be supplied for a

¹*Missionary Policy*, p. 32.

²*Re-thinking Missions* (Harper and Bros., 1932).

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short time with the distinct understanding that he will go on self-support at a specified date. An impressive ceremony is arranged for this occasion. This method would eliminate the decreasing grant plan.

Concerning the administration of finances several other plans have been proposed. It has been suggested that all funds to be expended in the district, whether raised locally or contributed as grants-in-aid, should be put into the hands of a district finance committee so that the District Superintendent will not have to act as a "pay-master" for his fellow ministers. It has also been suggested that the Methodist Church should move definitely to the adoption of a policy in which all missionary funds will be used only for the support of missionaries, who will be the gift of the Older Churches to the Younger. The salaries, allowances, personal expenses, and residence accounts of the missionaries should be handled either by the Mission Board directly or through a mission treasurer on the field, but kept entirely separate from the rest of the church funds. It has also been pointed out that the Methodist Church in India should begin to think realistically and formulate its future policies on the basis of steadily decreasing funds from America. There seems little hope that the American churches will ever return to their former standard of missionary contributions.

3. The problem of Special Gifts has been a difficult one for many years in the Methodist Church. The Missionary Society permitted William Butler, under certain restriction, to appeal directly to the American churches for the support of his Orphan Homes. But it was when Bishop Thoburn, under the spell of the Mass Movement, made his impassioned appeals to the home churches that the problem of Special Gifts became acute. The Missionary Society never gave its hearty approval to this system and with the organization of World Service the Church in India suffered a decline in the amount of money received through Special or Designated Gifts. Both the Central Conferences of 1923 and of 1931 adopted strong memorials to the General Conference requesting permission for missionaries to go before

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the American churches without restriction to appeal for funds for foreign missions.¹

The problem of special gifts has not yet been satisfactorily solved and any adequate missionary policy for the future must include a careful consideration of this matter.

5. A Policy of Concentration

The policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India in the matter of the deployment of missionary forces has varied from period to period. Dr. Butler selected a relatively small and compact field in the United Provinces, and proposed to cultivate it with a relatively large group of missionaries.² As long as he was superintendent of the Mission a policy of concentration prevailed. But Thoburn and Taylor were "expansionists," and under their leadership the Church broke across the earlier bounds and spread into all parts of India. This period is vividly, if somewhat rhetorically, described in the words of the report of the India Joint Survey Committee.³ But the results of this policy of rapid expansion are pictured in less glowing terms by the report of the "Fact-Finders." The number of Christian workers to each million of the population in the United Provinces, where Methodism started and where she should be strongest, was reported in 1927 to be only 107. In the fields of some of the Missions where the policy of concentration has been adopted, the number of workers per million of the population is more than 400.⁴

The leaders of Indian Methodism have themselves come to realize the dangers of the situation, and the Episcopal Address of 1928 said:

If in the past our motto has been expansion, coupled with evangelism, the immediate future demands that our motto shall be conservation, coupled with education. It never takes away from the glory of the past to recognize frankly, and with faith, the problems of the present.⁵

¹*MCC*, 1923, p. 65; 1931, pp. 12 f.

²*RMS*, XLII, 45 f.

³*MEB*, 1931, pp. 20 f.

⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁵*MCC*, 1928, p. 60.

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That portion of the Joint Survey Committee which made a study of the occupation of the field presented several specific recommendations, among which was the suggestion that in districts where there are unfruitful areas, the Conference should adopt a policy of withdrawal of workers from all places except where there are Christian communities demanding the care of a pastor, and the transfer of these workers to more fruitful fields. It was also recommended that wherever a district or part of a district can be, with real gain to the work, handed over to another Church, that such adjustments be made in the interests of Christian unity.¹

In harmony with these recommendations the Central Conference of 1931 authorized the South India Conference to open negotiations leading to the transfer of the Tamil work in Tuticorin and Madras to some other body, and approved of the Hyderabad Conference plan to transfer the Yelandu field to the Church Missionary Society.² All of this work was subsequently transferred as proposed. Previously, the Baluchistan work had been handed over to the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In addition to the general recommendations of the Joint Survey Committee noted above, a number of specific recommendations, some of which have already been acted upon, were listed.³

The present attitude of Methodist leaders in India is probably well represented in the words of Dr. Murray T. Titus:

I am convinced that under existing circumstances it is unwise for our Church and Mission to seek to hold all the territory which we are trying to occupy. In addition to those adjustments which I believe should wisely be made with reference to Conference boundaries, and certain large areas, I am convinced that we must adopt a policy of *selective concentration* even in some of our more fruitful fields.⁴

These are the words of one who, as a member of the India Joint Survey Committee, had the opportunity of making a thoroughly scientific yet entirely sympathetic survey of the whole situation.

¹MEB, 1931, p. 23.

²MCC, 1931, pp. 71, 124.

³MEB, 1931, pp. 23-25.

⁴Indian Witness, July 19, 1934.

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Another phase of the question of concentration has also engaged the attention of Methodist leaders in India. In the desire to avoid overlapping and the fruitless duplication of efforts they have begun seriously to explore the road leading to organic union with other Christian bodies at work in India. The Methodists have not favored a policy of "union at any cost," and have found themselves uninterested in the South India Plan in its present stage of development, but have expressed themselves ready to consider any reasonable plan that will lead to a union of the divided Christian forces.

6. Conclusion

Many problems of missionary policy in the Methodist Episcopal Church in India are still far from solution. But the leaders of the Church are probably thinking in larger and broader terms today than ever before. The Board of Foreign Missions is giving more vital and more comprehensive assistance in the formulation of significant policies than has ever been the case. The expression of opinion on the part of Nationals is being more earnestly sought for and more eagerly given than in any previous period. There is a growing conviction on the part of the leaders of Indian Methodism that a policy of concentration is necessary for the preservation and success of the work already undertaken. In recent years there has been a speeding up of Indianization in organization and administration. More or less systematic efforts have been made to develop voluntary lay leadership. The question of self-support is receiving earnest attention, especially in these days of declining missionary appropriations. The present leadership is characterized by a more intensive and widespread willingness to survey the whole situation, to consider Indian Methodism in terms of its relation to other Christian bodies in India and to the Church as a whole, and to take whatever steps are necessary to bring about the best interests of the Kingdom.

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